

This Year:
CWGS at 25
Our Silver Anniversary

Sunday June 8: CWGS Annual Water Plant Sale

9:00 to 3:00, Morrison Ctr.
CWGS Members admitted exclusively from 9:00 – 10:00.
Public admitted at 10:00.
Drop-off of donated plants on Sat. June 7 from 9:00 – 3:00.

Sunday June 22: Waterside Program 2:00 at the Neupert home, Boulder
Program "The Naturalized Pond"

July 12: Pond Tour/Picnic
11:00 to 4:00 Picnic at 5:00

July 26 and 27: Water Blossom Festival and 25th Anniversary Festivities, DBG.

Aug. 17: Waterside Program
2:00, Home of Deirdre Parker, Boulder

Sep. 14: Annual Mtg. And Board Elections
1:30 to 3:30, Gates Hall

Oct. 5: Possible Extra Mtg.
Time, location and Program to be determined

Dec. 7: Holiday Banquet
6:00 – 9:00 Morrison Ctr.



Volume 25 Number 4

25th Anniversary Year

June 2008

It's Plant Sale Time!

By Vicki Aber, CWGS President
and Plant Sale Chairperson

Sunday, June 8th is our annual plant sale. Once again we'll be at the Morrison Center at Denver Botanic Gardens. It's across the street from the main gardens, just north of the parking lot.

Park in DBG's main parking lot and walk along the sidewalk to the entrance on York Street. Come early for the best buys. CWGS members are admitted at 9:00 AM. The general public is admitted at 10:00. Last year some of the most popular selections were gone by the time the sale was opened to the public.

The plant sale committee has been busy perusing catalogs to identify the best plants to order for our sale. We try to have a selection of the old standbys and some new and unusual plants.

In the standby category we've ordered water hyacinths, and hopefully plenty. Last year they sold out early. We'll also have some carnivorous plants. These usually go early as well. There will be hibiscus - yes hibiscus for the pond! There will be some new varieties of Taro that have very interesting

leaves. And...there will be plenty of water lilies!

We'll have tropical (both day and night blooming) as well as hardy lilies ordered-in. We'll also have some lilies harvested from member's ponds. Last year there was a request for more cannas; we listened and this year we'll have be a larger selection of cannas, some potted, some not.



CWGS Annual Water Plant Sale

9:00 – 3:00
Sunday June 8
Morrison Ctr., DBG

Waterside Program
2:00 Sunday June 22
Neupert home, Boulder
(See article, page 3 for details)



There will be marginal plants, both hardy and tropical. We'll have submerged "oxygenating" plants. The list of plants goes on and on, but you get the idea. There will also be critters: fish, tadpoles, and snails. And we'll have pots to plant your purchases and fertilizer to keep them blooming.

(continued on page 5)

Visit us online at www.colowatergardensociety.org

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History of the Colorado Water Garden Society...

(continued from page 9)

early to sell tropical *Nymphaea*, the focus of the June event was the auction of these tropical water lilies. Of course, hardy *Nymphaea* and other aquatics also were sold. This sale, too, has become a yearly event for the CWGS. Also in 1985, CWGS members were first present at garden centers for weekend seminars and events to answer questions and inform people about water gardening. Members still participate in the weekend events, helping meet one of the CWGS objectives – to stimulate the study and culture of aquatic plants.

In 1986 the CWGS was invited to exhibit at the Colorado Garden and Home Show in the Horticultural Hall. This was the society's first showing before the public... Also in 1986, CWGS members joined with speakers from Lilypons Water Gardens and a speaker from England and held a mini symposium.

In 1987 the CWGS started an endowment fund at Denver Botanic Gardens. The funds are used for the Gardens' aquatic plant collection and other related water gardening expenses... The same year, the CWGS and the International Water Lily Society held the International Water Lily Society Symposium at Denver Botanic Gardens.

In the May, 1990 issue of *Horticulture* magazine, associate editor Teri Dunn wrote and Article, "The Colorado Water Garden Society." The article told about the CWGS and water gardening in the Rocky Mountain region... Thanks, in part, to the interest generated by the issue, the CWGS membership rose to more than 300 people. (See *Editor's notes*.)

In August, 1994 at Sparsholt College in Winchester, Hampshire, United Kingdom, the

International Water Lily Society presented an Award of Appreciation to the Colorado Water Garden Society. The award recognized CWGS's contributions to the International Water Lily Society's purpose of promoting the appreciation and enjoyment of water gardening...

Editor's Notes: John observed the year 1990 marked the highpoint of Society membership, and that the average for the first 14 years was around 200 members. (At present CWGS membership is about 125.)

The remaining three paragraphs of John's 1997 article summarized the then-current projects of CWGS: an installation at PorterCare Hospital, work with Denver Parks and Recreation's restoration of the old waterlily pool at City Park, and planning for the return of the IWGS Symposium that year.

– Bill Powell, Editor

About John Mirgon and his article

This history of the Society was written in 1997 by the club's founder and first President John Mirgon. The article was first published in the "Water Gardening" edition of "Mountain, Plain and Garden" The magazine of Denver Botanic Gardens, Volume 54 No.1, Spring 1997. It is reprinted here with the knowledge and consent of the DBG Water Garden Curator.

John Mirgon was inducted to the IWGS Hall of Fame in 1990. John died in 2005. His wife Mary, an avid water gardener herself and also an IWGS Hall of Fame inductee, is still a participating member of CWGS.

The article has been edited for length. Where John was speaking in the present tense, describing then-current works of the club in 1997, I've summarized his observations to make the article more easily understood by readers in 2008.

June 22nd Waterside Program: "Just what IS a naturalized pond?"

June is not only for the Annual CWGS Pond and Water Gardening Plant Sale. We also have another offering this month. On Sunday, June 22nd we inaugurate what we hope will become a regular feature of the Club – waterside programs at Members' water features.

For our first waterside program, Nancy and Werner Neupert have generously offered to host the meeting pondside at their home outside of Boulder. Their pond was on our tour two seasons back. Those of you who visited the Neupert's water garden will remember it for its large size, its wild and enthusiastic profusion of plants, and its spectacular setting against the backdrop of the Flatiron range.

The program starts at 2:00, but come early if you like and bring a picnic lunch to enjoy pondside. The program will begin with a facilitated discussion that asks "Just what is a naturalized pond?... What are its major attributes? Does it have only plants that are native to the region, or to any one specific region? Can it be big or small?"

As we explore the Neuperts' 75 ft. diameter water feature, no doubt other topics will be raised by its original practical purpose and construction, the unique geology and hydrology that make it possible (indeed, necessary), and the many plantings the Neuperts have made.

Nancy and Werner are especially known for their lotus. I'm afraid we can't promise that they'll be in bloom by the 22nd, but some of the Neuperts' many hardy waterlilies should be. And no doubt we'll spy some wildlife and insects amid the tangle of marginals, lilies, and lotus

leaves. If you're interested in native, dryland species, Nancy will show you xeric plants, indigenous to the site, that she's maintained as part of the surrounding vegetation.

The occasion will also provide those of you who live on the northern tier of the Denver Metro area and around Boulder and Longmont to explore the appeal of having future area "get-togethers" to become acquainted with other CWGS members in your neighborhood.

FINDING THE NEUPERTS:

The street address is 333 South 68th St. South 68th is a street off of South Boulder Road that's easy to miss because the street sign is on the median strip, not by the side of the road. South 68th St. runs south from South Boulder Rd and is directly opposite the entrance to Sacred Heart of Mary Catholic Church (which is set back from South Boulder Rd. a bit.) If lost or uncertain about directions, call Werner or Nancy at (303) 543-0228.

DIRECTIONS FROM DENVER:

Take the Boulder Turnpike (Rt. 36) toward Boulder. Exit the turnpike at the Table Mesa Rd/ South Boulder Rd. just after you have come down the long hill into Boulder. Keep to the right and head east on South Boulder Rd. So. 68th St. is one (1.0) mile past the traffic light at Cherryvale Rd.

COMING FROM LONGMONT OR THE EAST SIDE OF BROOMFIELD:

Take Rt. 287 to South Boulder Rd in Lafayette. Head west on South Boulder Rd. As you come down the long hill into Boulder, So. 68th St. is about one mile down the hill from the traffic light at 76th St.

PARKING:

There's plenty of parking on the street or on the driveway on the north side of the house. For those having difficulty walking, park in the circular driveway by the front door and come around the south side of the house.

New plants for old... ...Growing the Plant Swap.



Swappers sharing their experience in Gates Hall, DBG

More than twenty gardeners enjoyed this year's Plant Swap as they snapped-up an impressive array of water plants. It was the second year the Society has revived this tradition from the Club's earlier decades. The idea appears to be gaining popularity. And, why not? You get new plants for free. You even get user instructions!

Swap participants traded four species of Lotus, at least a half dozen species of hardy waterlilies, and a range of hardy and tropical marginals. Familiar faces and new members crowded the table in Gates Hall at DBG to share their plants and their experience.

Because of the numbers of Lotus brought and the obvious interest of the group, Werner Neupert gave impromptu instructions on the planting and growing of this durable, but sometimes particular genus. (For those of you interested in Lotus cultivation, read the article on our upcoming "Waterside Program"

to be held at the Neuperts' home on June 22.)

Other swap attendees shared expertise in inducing bloom, best methods for fertilization, tips on growing water plants at high altitude (sometimes it takes a greenhouse), and a range of topics that were raised by the discussion.

If you missed the swap but have an excess of plants from your spring division, there's still time to share your wealth. Donate your spare lilies or marginals to the CWGS annual plant sale. For details, read the lead article on page one of this issue.

New and Renewing Members

Jim and Tudi Arneill
Centennial, CO

Marth & Dennis Coombs *(New)*
Highlands Ranch, CO

Cathy Hawk
Denver, CO

Jonathan & April Hough
Boulder, CO

Jim Howell
Denver, CO

Carla Littlefield
Denver, CO

Steve & Maryann Miller
Boulder, CO

Welcome new members!

Kari Masoner *(New)*
Denver CO

Donna Nelson
Corpus Christi, TX

Terri O'Brien *(New)*
Englewood, CO

Jan & Dave O'Dell *(New)*
Highlands Ranch, CO

Bill Powell & Bruce Polkowsky
Denver, CO

Andrea Sahlen & Dan Fyles
Aurora, CO

Patricia Weis-Taylor & Rick Hinrichs
Boulder, CO

Focus on: History of the Colorado Water Garden Society

by John B. Mirgon

A water garden society – in Colorado's Mile High City? A few years back this question was asked by many people around the United States. Before long the society became well-known in the U.S., and other countries around the world noticed Colorado's interest in water gardening. Since the Colorado Water Garden Society's beginning, other water gardening societies have formed, and water gardening has become one of the fastest growing branches of horticulture.

The birth of the Colorado Water Garden Society was initiated by Denver Botanic Gardens' aquatic horticulturist Joseph V. Tomocik. He gave a class on *Nymphaea* (water lilies) on Feb. 13, 1983. He asked anyone interested in forming a water lily society to remain after the class. Ten people remained. Three were willing to accept officer positions for the society's board of trustees: myself, president; Jody Cue, vice president; and Scott Sprague, secretary/treasurer. The seven others who served as supporting members were very helpful later as committee chairpersons and with other activities.

Correspondence soon began with commercial water gardening suppliers to learn about how other plant societies – water gardening societies in particular – were structured. However, when registering with the Royal Horticultural Society in England, the board was informed that there were no other water gardening societies...

In June, 1985 the CWGS held its own first plant sale. Since the Gardens' May sale was too

(continued on page 10)

An earlier session when we were joined by DBG CEO Brian Vogt (far right)

Sunday volunteers end their spring season at Denver Botanic Gardens

The CWGS-sponsored "Sunday" volunteers celebrated the end of another successful spring season with a special session May 18. Following a short closing session, the Gardens and Water Garden Curator Joe Tomocik treated the volunteers (some 19 of us!) to lunch and a serenade by Joe's brother Ron, a noted accordionist.

Work will resume in the fall when we put the water gardens to bed for the winter. Until then we'll just have to content ourselves working in our own ponds

Treasurer's Report

CWGS Balance
As of mid May
\$ 17,881.87

**Focus on:
Bare Root Waterlilies**

By Vicki Aber, Plant Sale Chairperson

Ever go to the plant sale and see a bunch of waterlilies floating in a tub? They look like sausages with a few small leaves sticking out. Did you find yourself thinking, "Why anyone would buy such an ugly thing?" Here's why:

First of all, you may wonder why the tubers are so bare. When one cleans lily tubers but is not planning on planting them right away, most of the leaves and roots are removed so they don't decay and foul the water, taking the tuber down with them. The tuber that's left is full of stored energy and ready to burst forth with new growth if given half a chance. But, why should you give it this chance?

Bare root lilies are almost always donated by someone in the club. If someone in this area had enough luck with a variety to be dividing it, the lily must thrive in our rather difficult climate.

Also, a successfully propagated lily is a known lily; there are usually volunteers at the sale who are familiar with the cultivation of donated species. We also have reference books available. And, perhaps more importantly, donated bare root waterlilies are already acclimated here.

Plants we order-in usually come from Texas or Florida. They take the first few weeks to get use to Colorado. Often the homegrown bare root tuber is so thankful to be planted in dirt, it takes-off right away. You'll find bare root lilies, a bargain too. They're usually priced less than the "imports" even though they may be significantly larger.

This year why not try both? Buy a hardy lily that was "ordered-in" (one with nice leaves and maybe even a bloom) at our sale June 8th, but also try your luck at one of those ugly tubers. Let us know your experience.

**Coming in July:
The flow of refreshing waters**

By Gary Blubaugh, Pond Tour Co-Chair

This year's Pond Tour meanders the Metro area from the shady yards of Centennial in the south, through central Denver's historic neighborhoods, to the rolling landscape of Arvada.

The water features on the tour are a cross section. They range from 300 to 3,590 gallons and include a variety of types. Need some ideas for improvements at your own place? We have examples of container water gardens, a small urban pond with an Asian sensibility, and an installation with two ponds. We even have two ponds, each with four waterfalls, one of which is nestled below a red weeping willow!

The Tour begins on July 12th at 11:00 AM and runs until 4:00. Please plan on leaving the last pond by 4:00 so the pond hosts can secure their property and make it to the picnic, which will begin at 5pm. The location of the picnic will be provided in the July newsletter.

The July newsletter will have a schematic map showing the relative locations of the 13 sites and the picnic. We'll also provide brief descriptions of each site and directions from the nearest main intersection. In the meantime, if you have questions call Gary Blubaugh (303.989.4464) or Jonathan Hough (303.499.6578).

It's Plant Sale Time...

(continued from front page)

This year we're trying something new. Many people are unsure how to plant their plants, what soil to use, and where to get the soil. If you buy a plant and a pot, we'll plant it for you for a small fee. Then all you have to do is go home and put it in the pond!

The plant sale is a very labor-intensive effort. Please consider donating some time to help with it. Not only will you help the club, but you'll have a lot of fun. We'll offer donuts in the morning and lunch on both days for volunteers. Saturday we'll be getting the plants labeled and ready to put out. We have two shifts 9-12 and 12-3, but if that doesn't work with your schedule we can be flexible. One of the rewards of working Saturday is that you get to see all the plants first, and start making your wish list.

Sunday we need help manning the sale. You'll be helping people make selections, check out, greet, direct traffic, and pot plants. Let us know your expertise and we'll use you to best advantage. If you are fairly new to the hobby and don't feel like you have expertise, don't worry. We have lots of jobs that don't require an extensive knowledge of plants, and you can learn while you volunteer. I know this newsletter will come out really close to the sale but if you find that you have some time to give us, please let us know so we will be expecting you. (Vicki Aber 303-423-9216 or docvicki@msn.com)

Still have some extra plants from spring dividing that didn't make it to the plant swap? We'd love to receive donated plants. If at all possible we would like to receive donated plants on Saturday, June 7th. from 9 - 3 so we can get the donation labeled and placed with the right group of plants. If you know the type of plant and variety, write

that down so the next owner knows something about their purchase. If you really can't make Saturday, bring your donations Sunday, but the earlier the better.

The plant sale is a lot of work, but it's also a lot of fun. Please join us!

Thanks to CWGS volunteers who worked the DBG May Sale

Each year volunteers mostly drawn from the ranks of CWGS members organize and operate the Water Plants Division of the DBG Annual Plant Sale. This year nearly 30 of you participated in various ways.

Some folks helped to order plants, collect provisions, and attend organizational meetings. Others un-boxed and labeled deliveries, helped with set-up and, of course, operated the sale itself, which stretched over three days. Division CoChair Marge Oleson and I thank you for your Herculean effort. Thanks, also, to Joe Tomocik and his assistant Jermaine for their help with pre-sale delivery and set-up.

I'd hoped by now we'd have figures on Water Plant Division sales, but DBG has yet to report final division numbers. I can report that the sale as a whole exceeded it's goal to increase gross by 10% over last year. And we had fun spreading interest in water gardening!

Bill Powell

Board Business Meetings in 2008:

July 20: 2:00 PM - Classroom B, DBG
 Sept. 14: 12:00 PM - Gates Hall, DBG
 Oct. 5: 2:30 PM - Waring House, DBG

All members are welcome. Please join us!



This summer the Amazon flows through Denver

By Jim Arneill, Water Blossom Festival Chairperson

Have you ever fantasized that while exploring the Amazon basin you discover a new water plant species? Don Bryne not only daydreamed every plant collector's idle fantasy; he made it reality. And you can relive the excitement of Don's tropical discovery, but in considerably more comfort, at this summer's "Water Blossom Festival"

Co-presented by the Colorado Water Garden Society and Denver Botanic Gardens, the Festival will take place at DBG on Saturday, July 26 and Sunday, July 27. The two-day event will feature notable speakers from around the United States, as well as hands-on learning opportunities and tours of local interest.

Don Bryne, a member of the International Water Lily and Water Garden Society's Hall of Fame, will be one of several imminent speakers to address the Festival. In addition to sharing his expertise in hybridizing and introducing waterlilies (many of which are IWGS award winners), Don will speak on his recent

experience while on expedition in South America near the confluence of Rio Branco and Rio Negro northwest of Manaus Brasil. There Don, Patrick Nutt (famed horticulturist from Longwood Gardens), and others of their team discovered what may prove to be a new species of dwarf Victoria capable of cultivation.

For those of you who might be unfamiliar with Victoria and recall them dimly from lithographs of Victorian children standing on the huge "water platters" that constitute the plant's pads, the Festival offers another treat: Nancy Styler, Director of the Victoria Conservancy, will present "The Victoria Waterlily, Its History and Lore".

"Urban Nature" will be addressed with two presentations brimming with practical ideas for bringing nature and beauty into city settings. Sarada Krishnan, Director of Horticulture at Denver Botanic Gardens, will present "Urban Gardening: The Art of Creating Inspiring Gardens." Trevor Cole, a transplanted Englishman who operates two of the largest water garden centers in the southeast US, will show how water gardens of any scale and style can be enriched by "Inviting Nature to the Garden."

Breakout activity sessions will cover a range of subjects from carnivorous plants to digital photography of water features.

Local Master Gardener and water gardening expert Cyndie Thomas will continue the festival's focus on urban gardening with her presentation on containers that suit both the beginning water gardener with tight space (and tight budget), but that also complement even the most ambitious landscape.

And you can learn about the insects and invertebrates that populate our region's waters when Colorado State University Entomologist Whitney Cranshaw presents "Life in the Water Garden – the Wee Creatures."

Highlights of the event include an extensive silent auction and the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Colorado Water Garden Society, the oldest organization of its type in the world.

By the way, are you curious how water gardening and CWGS came to exist in such an arid climate? That's covered, too! Veteran CWGS members Lois Mayerchak and Nancy Styler will present "The History of Water Gardening in Denver."

We have a wealth of other offerings – hands-on activity sessions, trips to local water gardening sites, and much more. Look for more details in the July newsletter.

We hope you will be part of this memorable and exciting event and that you'll take advantage of both days of planned activities.

The silver anniversary of CWGS is a special time in our history – please show your support and enjoy everything that is planned at the Festival!

For current information about event offerings and registration, check online now at www.denverbotanicgardens.org Or visit one of the event's sponsoring vendors. They're listed in the accompanying box. Each sponsor will host brochures and registration forms.

CWGS thanks the participating vendors that are helping to make the Festival possible:

- Arapahoe Acres Nursery
- Country Fair Garden Center
- Echter's Greenhouse and Gardens
- Falls by Fox
- Highlands Garden Center
- Jared's Gardens
- Nick's Garden Center and Farm Market
- Paulino Gardens
- Tagawa Garden Center and Florist
- Wilmore Nursery, Greenhouse, and Garden Center



About Don Bryne's Amazon Adventure....

For those of you eager to read about Don's "Excellent" adventure and the horticultural potential for a dwarf Victoria species should it prove to be replicable in captivity, visit www.internationalwaterlilycollection.com. The site includes photos, a table of plant characteristics, and a journal by Lindsey Zuk on the expedition. There's also a link to the Florida Aquaculture website which contains additional information.

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Denver, CO 80220

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Signature _____

Date _____

Pond Experience (Beginner) _____ (Some Skill) _____ (Pro) _____

** Note: Providing your e-mail address authorizes and enables CWGS to send you notifications of interest from time to time. CWGS does not share e-mail addresses with other entities.*

Contact me concerning volunteer opportunities I have checked below:

DBG Volunteer Sundays _____ **Water Plants booth, DBG May Sale** _____
Hudson Gardens _____ **Newsletter** _____ **CWGS Plant Sale (June)** _____ **Pond Tour (July)** _____
Water Blossom / Anniversary Festival (July) _____ **Holiday Party (Dec.)** _____

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using *PayPal*

YOU CHOOSE 2008

Plant Primary

In keeping with the election year we thought we'd hold an election of favorite plants. To nominate your favorite plants in the following categories, just tear out this form and mail it to:

Vicki Aber
8046 Parfet Way
Arvada, CO 80005

If you really can't decide, you may nominate more than one per category. We'll have an 'election' later this year once we have the nominees in.

Favorite Hardy Lily _____

Favorite Tropical Lily _____

Favorite Hardy Marginal plant _____

Favorite Tropical Marginal plant _____

Favorite plant that you would like to have, but don't _____

Nominate now; don't leave your favorite plant high and dry. Let's see what a versatile group of plants we can assemble for the election. (Who knows, if you reveal a plant you'd really like, but don't yet have, maybe another Member will share a piece with you?)