This Year:  

CWGS at 25  

Our Silver Anniversary

**Fall is in the air.**

*But wait, I still have more summer I want to enjoy.*  

By Vicki Aber, President

Does any one else feel the summer has just zipped by? We’ve had quite a busy summer with all the CWGS happenings. I hope everyone had a chance to sample a few of our events.

Our last Waterside meeting at Deidre Parker’s home was fascinating. (Quirky is a good description, too.) I could have investigated for hours and still found interesting little areas that I hadn’t noticed at first. What a treat; thank you Deidre!

Thanks also, Deidre, for setting up the tour of the Meditation Garden at MARPA. Strolling by the pond there was a very different experience and quite relaxing. (For those of you who missed the meeting, an article and photos follow on page 3.)

Our next get-together will be the last general meeting before the Christmas party in December. On Sunday, September 14, we will hold a panel discussion on the general topic of what to do with tropical water plants for the winter and on measures for closing the pond down for winter. If you’ve developed any tried-and-true (or devilishly clever, for that matter) methods of over-wintering tropical plants, we’d love to have you share that. If you have questions on what to do now that winter will be here soon, bring those too. (I know I have trouble letting go of the beautiful tropical lilies, cannas, and taro in the fall.)

**SUNDAY, SEPT. 14**

1:30 – 3:30 pm  

Waring House, DBG

Program: “What to do with your tropical plants over winter?”

Annual Meeting and Elections:  
See page 9 for proposed slate of Directors

September 14 is also our Annual Meeting during which the Club elects the Board of Directors for the coming 2009 season. Please come and participate in the election of CWGS leadership.

CWGS is structured to operate with a maximum of 13 Directors. All elected positions are for two-year terms. Terms are staggered so that only half of the positions will come open in any one year. Service for a particular office is limited to two

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Visit us online at www.colowatergardensociety.org
Repose and Scrap Sinks:
Second waterside program offers contrasts

by Bill Powell

Our recent tour of the Hakubai Temple grounds and CWGS Member Deidre Parker’s wonderfully imaginative Boulder back yard drew a good deal of interest. More than 20 members enjoyed two very different water gardens and learned a bit about the circumstances that inspired them.

Martin Mosko, Abbot of the Boulder’s Hakubai temple and also a noted landscape architect, and Alxe Noden welcomed CWGS with a brief presentation on the history of the temple property. Its first use was solely practical - a hospice for ailing and damaged plants. Rather than throw away plants that could not be used in his landscapes, Martin planted them. Eventually the ad-hoc plant hospital was transformed, appropriately, into a “place of repose,” a park for “healing and wholeness” dedicated to Hojosama Keibun Otokawa Roshi, Mr. Mosko’s mentor in the practice of Zen Buddhism.

The Temple garden is arranged around a large pool. Surprisingly, water was a late addition to the garden composition. A willow, now 35 years old and mature, predates the pond.

Martin situated the water to wrap one side of the willow. Depth varies from a few inches to more than three feet. Although lined with a flexible membrane, over the years soil has collected in the basin. Deidre Parker, CWGS Member and volunteer in the Temple grounds, has used this sediment to advantage. Using specimens left over when she moved from a larger house (and pond) to her current home, Deidre has planted the Temple’s pond extensively in a naturalized fashion, fixing the hardy lilies directly in the trapped sediment.

An impressive stand of Yellow Snowflake (Nymphoides germinata) floats along the margins of the many hardy waterlilies. Close by, Deidre’s latest experiment, a Victoria Longwood hybrid, persists despite waters much cooled by recent heavy rains. (Deidre was given the plant during July’s Water Blossom Festival by club member and noted Victoria expert Nancy Styler.)

The Temple pond also includes a handsome collection of Koi and many frogs. Deidre speculates that the pond’s lining of sediment provides a particularly good environment for frogs even if, as Martin noted, the trade-off is less-sparkling water clarity.

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Fall is in the air (continued from front page)

consecutive terms (4 years), although a person may return to an officer’s position previously held following a hiatus of one term. Open slots may be filled at the discretion of the Board by appointment to complete the remainder of the unfilled position.

The following Board positions are up for election on September 14, 2008:

- Vice President (currently Jim Arneill) Open
- Secretary (currently Bill Bathurst) Open
- Member at large (2) Open
- Member at large (4) Bill Powell, standing for re-election
- Member at large (6) Marge Olson, standing for re-election
- Member at large (8) Janet Bathurst, standing for re-election

Because of Gail Goldberg leaving the state, we also have an opening to complete the remaining one-year term for Member at large (1).

Please consider putting your name in the hat. If you are new to the club, that’s great, we can always use new ideas! If you have been around for a while but not been very active in the club, then now is your chance. If you’ve been on the Board and want to return, we welcome you.

Nominations from the floor on September 14 for any of the available positions are encouraged! Please attend.

We will also be having a Board planning meeting October 5th at the Waring House at DBG. This will be an important meeting to put closure on events of this year and outline plans for next year. Members are always welcome to attend Board business meetings, but this would be a particularly good meeting to join us if you have input or thoughts about this year’s activities or plans for 2009.

Remember, 2009 will likely bring changes to the club’s activities, both in schedule and location because of the construction that will be underway at Denver Botanic Gardens.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Balance as of August 23
$19,402.74

New and Returning Members

Dennis Albrecht
Aurora, CO

Janice Barbee & Carolyn Norblom
Denver, CO

Mike & Kelly Booth (new)
Centennial, CO

Al & Glenda Kravitz
Highlands Ranch, CO

Werner & Nancy Neupert
Boulder, CO

Efrim & Renee Sotanovich (new)
Centennial, CO
Learn Free at DBG

OK, it’s not entirely free. You do have to invest some sweat equity. But there’s no better way to learn the ins-and-outs of water garden plant propagation and management.

Volunteering for the Fall Sunday sessions at Denver Botanic Gardens is easy, fun, and educational. Soon, beginning Sunday, September 28 we’ll start our fall season. Co-sponsored by CWGS and DBG, and under the direction of DBG Water Garden Curator Joe Tomocik, the Sunday team will work four Sundays. We meet, weather dependent, at 8:30 am for three-hour sessions.

What can you learn during those three hours?

1. **How to winterize your water feature.** Why, you may even learn how to sweep a pond! It’s true our preparation for winter will include practical chores, like moving of plants, inventory, trimming, and cleaning of debris from ponds and storage areas, but you’d be surprised what useful propagation tips you can pick-up from the “old-hats” even while during mundane chores.

2. **How to divide hardy marginals and hardy waterlilies.** Although we typically do more division during our spring sessions than in fall, we may divide a few, select plants for special treatment during dormancy.

3. **How to harvest tropical waterlily corms.** Unable to bring your new, valued tropical waterlily inside for the winter? Learn techniques for collecting and saving vital corms of tropicals for replanting in late winter for bloom next summer.

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About Waterside Programs:

1. CWGS tried Waterside Programs for the first time this season. In June we visited the Neupert’s pond. A program on the history of naturalized pond design accompanied the tour. In August we visited the Hakubai Temple grounds and Deidre Parker’s home. Both programs were among our best-attended general meetings of the season.

2. Waterside Programs offer the flexibility of moving meetings to various areas of the Metro area and experiencing new water gardens.

3. In 2009 DBG will be undergoing major reconstruction. CWGS may not be able to secure meeting space at DBG as frequently as in previous years. Programs held outside DBG will be needed, but as this year’s Waterside Program demonstrated, holding meetings pondside can be interesting.

4. Waterside Programs can be as flexible and as varied as our Members’ ponds. Where the water garden suggests a topic, the Board will be happy to find a speaker to pair with a visit to your garden…or we can simply visit your garden for an afternoon of conversation.

5. Why not nominate your water feature – or another that you’d like to visit? No need to provide refreshments. The club will take care of that. Contact Bill Powell at 303.355.8098 or via email wbpow@comcast.net.

All Election Campaigns Come To An End…

At the beginning of the season we invited members to vote on favorite water plants. Your last chance to express your preference is coming up at the meeting on September 14.

Preferences (and winners) will be announced at the Christmas Party.

Canary in the Water

Algae marks “dead zones” in world oceans

By Bill Powell

Last month’s issue of ‘The Water Garden’ included an article on the potential commercial use of fast growing algae as bio-fuel. An earlier newsletter from last season covered the phenomenon of hypoxia that threatens much of the Gulf of Mexico and other seas around the globe. The proliferation of Algae is common to both articles.

Fast growing and prolific, Algae “explosions” mark areas of estuaries and water where oxygen content has dropped below the level required to sustain marine life. While sudden algae growth is the direct cause of this hypoxia (in that subsequent decay of the algae robs the water column of oxygen), the condition that makes Algae’s explosive bloom possible is the actual culprit. Algae is merely doing its job...too well.

Excessive nutrients in the water, coming mostly from agri-chemicals that leach into rivers, foster algae growth at the mouths of the river basins where the water turns still and fatal. The result is the expanding phenomenon of the ocean’s “dead zones.”

The expanding hypoxic cycle

Certain forms of bio-fuel production and hypoxia are related in that: Fishermen must skirt dead zones in search of catch. Extra travel increases fuel use, which in turn puts additional pressure on fossil fuel production. Increases in world demand for fuel encourages farmers to plant more corn to satisfy growing demand for ethanol – a biologic source of fuel.

To grow more corn on the same acreage, farmers increase applications of nitrogen and phosphorous. Rains and sedimentation sweep the runoff from farms into rivers that feed into the world’s oceans. There, explosive algae blooms eventually decompose depleting the water of oxygen, driving out aquatic life, and enlarging the dead zone for fishermen.
energy through the use of their gills and organs – hence the rationale for increasing the salt level in pond water so as to lessen the inequality of the solutions and thereby reduce the work the fish must do to maintain their own internal fluid equilibrium. There’s also speculation that dilute salt helps to increase fish production of natural stress coats as well as to make potential problems, like parasites, less prevalent by altering their internal fluid equilibrium. (Some Koi keepers, noting that it’s salt’s “irritating” property that encourages the stress coat, question the wisdom of adding an irritant to the pond. I was able to find very little information regarding the impact of dilute salt solutions on amphibians.)

But as we all know intuitively, unless you’re keeping a saltwater pond in your backyard stocked with saltwater fish and plants, freshwater fish (well most of them…there are species that can transition from marine to freshwater) will not flourish or even survive in truly salty water. Neither can most common lake and pond plants, including water lilies, tolerate large doses of salt. In fact most plant species are far less tolerant of salt than are fish.

Salt, then, in freshwater applications must be quite dilute, so as to avoid toxicity while gaining the benefit in reduction of osmotic pressure. And if freshwater fish do well on their own without salt in nature, then why bother to add it in our ponds, one might ask?

Well, of course, not all fresh water aquifers are inherently saltier than the water that surrounds them, an unequal state of solution exists on two sides of a semi-permeable membrane. These unequal solutions result in the unbalanced flow of water from the less saline solution toward the more saline solution (that is from the pond to the fish) as the unequal solutions attempt to reach equilibrium.

To deal with this fluid imbalance, fish have special mechanisms that allow them to counter the inflow of fluid, but to do so they must exert...