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Annual Plant Swap
Thursday, May 19
7:00 PM

Gates Hall
Denver Botanic Gardens

Pot-luck at 6:00 PM

Online at:
www.colowatergardensociety.org

So, we "Got Wet"...

... Now let's swap!

by Vicki Aber, CWGS President

We had a great Get Wet Event. Megan Bowes's presentation was very informative. (See the follow-up article on page 3 of this newsletter.) I had no idea our Colorado wetlands were so diverse. Joe Tomocik gave an update on happenings at DBG. Lois Mayerchak did a tribute to Stan Skinger that was very moving. Of course door prizes are always a plus, and the vendors were well received. If you weren't there, you missed out on a great beginning to the water gardening season.

Our next meeting is the annual plant swap on the evening of Thursday, May 19. The swap always brings a great time. We'll start with a shared pot luck supper at 6:00. If you can't get there in time for the food, that's ok; just come for the swap at about 7:00. We will be meeting in Gates Hall at DBG. For those of you joining us for the potluck, bring a favorite dish to share. Just keep in mind that Gates Hall doesn't have kitchen facilities to chill or heat food. The Club provides drinks and tableware.

Enter the Gardens via the main entrance building. (The Gardens has switched to late summer hours and is now open until 9:00 PM.) Tell the attendant your reason for coming to the Gardens is to attend our meeting. We will have explained to staff that people who are attending our meeting should be allowed free entry. Follow the path to the entrance to the main education building. Walk through the lobby court. Gates Hall is in the back left corner of the lobby.

Here's how the plant swap works:

1. Identify a plant or plants that need dividing. Keep what you want and bring the excess to the swap. Repeat this step as often as possible!
2. Bring the plants to the swap. Take care so as not to drip on the floor.
3. Share everything you know about the plant - how it grows for you, if it blooms, what color and when... how big it gets and anything else you think the new owner would like to know about your plant.
4. After everyone has shared information about their offerings, you get to pick one new plant for every one you brought. You go home with new plants - all free! - AND you are already an expert on the growing requirements of the plant.

Are you new to the hobby and don't have a plant that needs dividing? No problem, come anyway and learn about a bunch of plants to put on your wish list. There is a high likelihood that after swapping is complete there will be extra plants still needing homes. And we aren't snobs about the plants having to be water plants; people have brought terrestrial plants and even decorations to share.

Try to make this meeting if you can, it is one of the most enjoyable (and rewarding) meetings we have.

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The Water Garden is published eight times a year and is made available to current members both in printed form and online. Past volumes of The Water Garden are archived online at:

www.colowatergardensociety.org

CWGS Treasurer's Report:
Balance as of May 1
\$10,529.72

Need to join or renew?...

... The application is on page 9

Does CWGS have your current email address? If you're not sure, contact us.

2011 Committee and Event Chairs:

Newsletter Editor Bill Powell	303.355.8098
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Dorothy.Martinez@colowatergardensociety.org.

Photos by Marge Oleson
and Bill Powell



Club President Vicki Aber waves
in the lobby during the vendor's
fair before the program



Above:
Megan Bowes, Get Wet's primary
speaker

Below:
Audience in Gates Hall



Where Water Meets Land

April's "Get Wet" examined Colorado's wetlands

By Jim Arneill and Bill Powell

A passionate group of water gardeners assembled in Gates Hall to enjoy this year's Get Wet feature program. Megan Bowes's presentation of "Colorado Wild and Wonderful Wetlands" educated the audience on the characteristics of Colorado's diverse wetlands and invited us to examine these special habitats from a variety of perspectives.

Megan noted that while wetlands are comparatively less common in the high, arid west, they are not rare. Wetlands exist on all continents except Antarctica, wherever water meets land. Sometimes wetlands are fleeting. They can exist for as little as two weeks during periods of saturation from melt or seasonal storms, and then vanish. Or wetlands can be a persistent feature of the landscape.

Colorado's wetlands decreased by half over the first 100 years of settlement by Europeans. Farming, irrigation practices, and diversion and collection of water for domestic use have contributed to the loss. Today only 2% of Colorado's current landscape is wetland, yet 75% of wild creatures depend upon wetlands for water and sustenance.

The arid west hosts five different types of wetland, of which three – wet meadow, freshwater marsh, and riparian (riverside) wetlands - are most prevalent in Colorado. The wet meadow generally incorporates mineral soils, as opposed to peat-based soils derived from decay of large stands of marsh plants. The meadow is home to many herbaceous plants such as blue vervain, prairie gentian and swamp milkweed, host to the Monarch butterfly.

Colorado's freshwater marshes, having a higher percentage of organic matter than meadows, are important as crucibles for staged growth and the succession of species. Here marginal and emergent plants give way over time to herbaceous shrubs and then finally to successive stages of tree canopy.

Riparian wetlands are generally stabile features of the landscape, but they too can change with the changing flow of the river. Man's (and beaver's) interventions of dams reduces flow, influencing species that grow along the riverbanks. And natural meander of streams can cut-off loops of the water course, converting them from riparian to marsh conditions called oxbow lakes that will eventually fill with sediment and slowly transform wetland to more upland conditions.

Megan's extensive power-point investigation of Colorado wetlands also included some native plant recommendations for our backyard ponds. Marsh marigold is a North American native that deserves inclusion in the home water garden. The less-well known Nuphar luteum is a close relative of the hardy nymphaea

(continued on page 4)

Photos by Marge Oleson and
Bruce Polkowsky



Above:
Water Garden Curator
Joe Tomocik

Below:
Lois Mayerchak presenting a
memorial to Stan Skinger.



Where Water Meets Land

(continued from page 3)

species we all grow, and it's a native of higher altitude ponds in Colorado. As DBG's curator of Water Gardens Joe Tomocik pointed out later during Get Wet, Nuphar is a lovely, yellow-blooming plant that flourishes in high mountain lakes. It can be a bit challenging to grow in Denver, but Joe knows of at least one Denver gardener who's had success with it.

Cattails and bulrushes are also North American natives that are attractive for the home gardener in that they offer year-round interest, food and habitat for wildlife, and good water filtration. (Bulrush are often used in the final stage of municipal waste water treatment, for example.) But even native species have their drawbacks. Rampant species like duckweed, bulrush, cattails and certain rushes can form monocultures that propagate quickly to the exclusion of other species. Habitat diversity is challenged by such plants, whether native or introduced. (For more on the challenge of monoculture, see the article on page 7.)

Other highlights of our season kick-off event included a talk by Joe Tomocik, Aquatic Collection Curator of Denver Botanic Gardens. Joe covered a wide range of topics, including lotus culture, the late-season reward of tropical lilies, his new-found interest in fish keeping, and praise for the outstanding volunteers who get the Gardens up and running every spring.

Colorado Water Garden Society Honorary Life Member Lois Mayerchak presented a memorial tribute to Stan Skinger. Having served on the board of CWGS for many years and volunteered many hours with tropical water lilies at the Gardens, Stan was fondly remembered both personally and professionally for his work and his mentoring. (Lois was one of the people who learned tropical waterlily propagation from Stan during the time that Stan headed up that program under Joe Tomocik's direction.)

Jim Arneill concluded the evening's program with an overview of the upcoming CWGS events in 2011. He encouraged everyone to become involved in the many fun social and learning opportunities.

We are very appreciative of garden centers and local pond businesses who sent representatives to "Get Wet." An important goal of the event is to share the many outstanding resources that are available in the metropolitan area. Both before and after the program, these resource representatives were available to discuss products and services they provide. ■

Special thanks to the following for being part of Get Wet 2011

Participating vendors:

*Enery Water Gardens
Highlands Garden Center
Nick's Garden Center
Rocky Mountain Waterscape
Tagawa Garden Center
True Pump and Equipment*

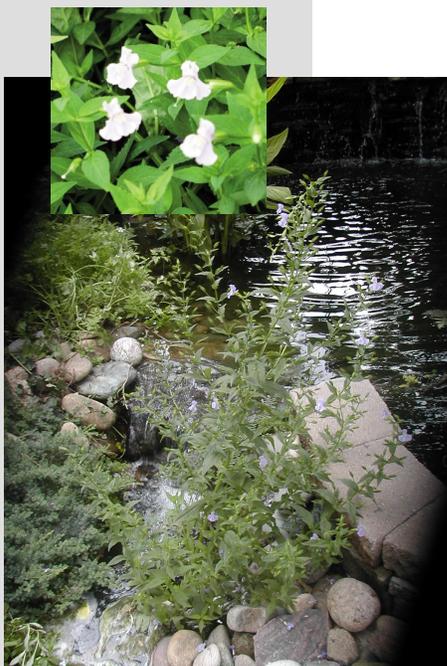
Our presenters for Get Wet:

*Megan Bowes
Lois Mayerchak
Joe Tomocik*

Participating educational societies:

*Colorado Water Garden Society
Denver Botanic Gardens
Colorado Native Plant Society*

...And, thank you to everyone who attended this year's event! We are off to a great start...



A native of eastern North America, lavender musk is a vigorous grower that provides “a bright spot among the reeds and rushes.”

Curiously (and happily) lavender musk doesn't smell like musk.

Focus on....

Favorite plants from my pond Lavender musk – Mimulus ringens

By Vicki Aber

What a strange common name! It makes me think of the color lavender and the wonderful scent of lavender, but then you encounter the word “musk”, which doesn't evoke positive associations in the scent department. I have no idea where the plant picked up this common name. (It's also sometimes called Allegheny monkey flower.) The proper name is: *Mimulus ringens*. It is related to the yellow monkey flower that is commonly sold as an annual.

Lavender Musk is a very happy little plant that will grow and flower in sun or shade. It tends to get a little leggy in the shade but blooms just as well. The plant starts blooming in early to mid June and continues most of the summer. As the stems lengthen the plant adds more blooms at the top. The flowers are a light purple and are said to look like a monkey face. I think they look somewhat like a snapdragon.

Lavender musk can reach one to three feet in height. The leaves are about 2 inches long and serrated. It fills-up a pot fairly quickly. I haven't planted it in an unconfined area but I suspect it might multiply more than you wanted if left to it's own devices.

Being pretty tolerant, lavender musk will accept anything from moist soil to submerging the pot underwater up to about 4 inches. Best news: it is hardy in our climate! It is even hardy to Zone 3 for those of you in the foothills. I don't do anything special with the pot (like dropping the pot lower over winter), and I'm sure the freeze line gets down as far as my pot in my pond.

Lavender musk is a native to Eastern North America. Even so, as we learned from Megan Bowes at our Get Wet meeting, we don't want to import plants that can naturalize here to become invasive pests. Be responsible and keep vigorous growers like this in your yard and not in our native wetlands.

We have very few marginals that bloom for long periods, so lavender musk is a bright spot among the reeds and rushes. In case the name still presents a concern, I have not noted any scent, good or bad.

New and Returning Members for March:

Joanne Bowen,
Boulder, CO

**Mark K Brengosz, &
David C. Fifield, David C.**
Aurora, CO

Jim Carlson
Denver, CO

Susan Ferguson
Lakewood, CO

Joan & Brian Greeland
Arvada, CO

Michael & Susie Hawes
Englewood, CO

Bud Kiebler
Franktown, CO

Mary Purdy
Lafayette, CO

Jim & Bev Wohlenhaus
Westminster, CO

Thanks, all!

Photos by Bill Powell



Above:
Aquatics Division Co-Chair Marge Oleson chats with Tudi Arneill

Below:
Volunteers discuss hardy lilies with buyers



CWGS volunteers staff the DBG aquatics booth

CWGS volunteers have just completed operation of the Denver Botanic Gardens Aquatics Booth. The booth is open each year in early May for two days of public sales during which plants of all sorts are sold. Annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs are marketed. Aside from raising funds to support the Gardens, the event helps to raise awareness about gardening, plants suited to our region, and related issues. This year the sale's theme focused on native plants, for example.

The Aquatics Booth is organized and staffed entirely by people solicited by our Club. Members help to select and order plants. They also assist in setting-up the booth, pricing and display of plants, and with sales to the public. Although the club also distributed informational brochures during the sale, many of the volunteers talked at length with shoppers about aspects of water gardening.

Denver Botanic Gardens along with Marge Oleson and Bill Powell, Co-Chairs of the Aquatics Division, would like to thank all of the CWGS members who donated time and expertise in this year's sale.

By the way, if you missed DBG's May sale or you still need more aquatic plants and supplies (and who doesn't?), keep in mind that in less than a month CWGS will be having its own sale - also at Denver Botanic Gardens. Because the Club's sale falls a month later in the season, we are able to offer tropical lilies and night bloomers that can't be marketed in May. It's another reason to save the date - June 12 from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM... or until we've sold out!

Look for more about the Club's sale in the June issue of The WaterGarden.

Thanks to CWGS members who helped with the DBG Aquatics booth:

Dennis Albrecht
Tudi Arneill
Gabriella Bertelmann
Joyce Bickel
Bill Bittman
Jo Ann Bowen
Ben Coleman
Dennis Coombs
Doris Freestone
Len Freestone
Peter Hier
Bob Hoffman
Trina Jacobson
Cheri Jensen
Dorothy Martinez

Carla Mascarenas
Carla Littlefield
Rebecca Nash
Nancy Neupert
Werner Neupert
Marge Oleson
Deirdre Parker
Brenda Parsons-Hier
Bill Powell
Andi Sahlen
Mary Shaver
Michael Weber
Ellen Westbrook
Jim Wohlenhaus

And... special thanks to DBG Staff:

Allison Kiehl
Karyn Chaffin
Sarada Krishnan
Joe Tomocik
& all the folks in Operations

Potato farming photo
from Wikipedia



Above:
Deliberate monoculture practiced
by man to simplify farming and
increase yield

Below:
Inadvertent monoculture produced
by water hyacinth's exploitation of
favorable non-native environment



Water hyacinth
Eichhornia crassipes
Photo by Ann Murray
© 2002 University of Florida

Murray, University of Florida

What is monoculture? ...and why should we care?

by Bill Powell

The phrase apparently also has meaning for computer applications and can refer to the Anglo-American dominance of pop music, believe it or not! But in the realm of botany “monoculture” means growing one single crop over a wide area.¹

Monoculture of plants is often a deliberate practice, undertaken by man to simplify and increase food and crop production. But some species have an innate ability to enforce monoculture by out-competing other species. This competitive advantage is often exaggerated when a species is introduced to a new environment. Absence of natural predators or competing plant species allows the introduced plant to seize the terrain, using all the available sustenance and water while shading out other plants.

Some plants are more likely than others to form monocultures. We often call these species “easy growers” or just downright rampant. In some situations such plants can be considered - and even identified legally as - invasive or noxious weeds. This determination is particularly likely if the “invasive” plant is one that has been introduced by man and is perceived to succeed at the expense of native species or commercial interests.

Aside from crowding-out indigenous species, monoculture - whether naturally occurring or enforced by man as is the case in most conventional farming - presents other problems. Loss of soil fertility is a well-known result of man's monoculture of single crops. Another possible consequence is that the complete canopy of vegetation in a monoculture may be destroyed by a single pathogen, pest, or disaster (like fire). Man's suppression of fire in protected timberlands has led to large stands of old growth in which a single species dominates and in which most of the plants are older and more vulnerable to stressors, Fire, an infestation of mountain beetles, or prolonged drought can take down the entire forest cover, whereas a more diverse forest canopy with a variety of species and successions of growth would be less affected.

Monoculture in wetlands:

In her presentation at Get Wet, Megan Bowes identified a number of wetland plants, both introduced and native, that can develop monoculture mats, out-competing other plants and thereby reducing bio-diversity. Such plants aren't “bad” in themselves. Indeed they're often attractive both for their inherent beauty and their rampant growth, which ensures a quick, luxurious show. The problem is one of balance and of intelligent use.

In our ponds and gardens, we can usually control monoculture-inclined plants. When water hyacinth threatens to take over, we can thin the stand and throw the excess on the mulch pile. And here in Colorado, we don't have to worry tropical or even sub-tropical species will persist and expand exponentially. Winter is

(continued on bottom of page 8)



Photo from
WaterGardenNews.com

They're Here! *N. Wanvisa arrives.*

Those of you who purchased *Nymphaea Wanvisa* (winner of the IWGS "Best New Hardy AND Best New Waterlily prizes last year) already know that the tubers have arrived from the growers. The Club had wonderful interest from our marketing and there should be lots of *Wanvisa* stories circulating by late summer. Please keep track of your results with the plant whether good, bad or indifferent. We'd like to know how this new hardy cultivar behaves along the front range.

Since one of the parents of *Wanvisa* is likely to have been *N. Joey Tomocik*, a lily that's grown often in our climate, we're assuming the plant should perform well here. However, we won't know for a season or two. And we won't know unless we have a sufficiently broad sample of your experiences. So... keep lots of notes and be sure to share them with the club.

Below:

Typha latifolia, the common North American cattail, is a native wetlands plant with much to recommend it to the front range water gardener.

Uncontrolled, though, it can develop large monocultures that out-compete other species and transform the landscape to the detriment of bio-diversity.



Photo from Wikipedia

What is monoculture?....

(continued from page 7)

our best defense. But in more temperate zones rampant tropical plants *can* become pests and can threaten the local eco-system.

The water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) is well-known example of an exotic tropical ornamental that can have devastating impact when introduced to temperate zones where there are no native defenses (or a cold Colorado winter.) The plant is now a pest on four continents.

"First introduced to North America in 1884, an estimated 50 kilograms per square metre of hyacinth once choked Florida's waterways, although the problem there has since been mitigated. When not controlled, water hyacinth will cover lakes and ponds entirely; this dramatically impacts water flow, blocks sunlight from reaching native aquatic plants, and starves the water of oxygen, often killing fish (or turtles). The plants also create a prime habitat for mosquito, the classic vector of disease."

Paradoxically, it is the native wetland species *Typha* (common cattail) that poses a greater threat to the inner mountain west. While valuable as animal habitat and a good filter of water quality, the species often forms large mats that can invade brackish marshes, out-competing species that are important to the traditional ecosystem.

Change and succession of species are inevitable. Some species and ecosystems will thrive for years in apparent stability. Others can falter quickly. Man can't prevent change, but we can help to manage its consequences and limit its impact by maintaining a diverse eco-system. So, as Vicki Aber observed in her article elsewhere in this issue, take care that the vigorous plant (whether native or exotic) that you value in your water garden this season doesn't escape to become next year's invasive pest.

1. Ref and quote: Wikipedia



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*For details regarding rates, sizes, and formats of ads, contact Bill Powell
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Denver, CO 80220

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* Required for electronic receipt of newsletter.
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___ Check here if you are also a member of Denver Botanic Gardens

Membership Fees:
\$15.00 Individual; \$20.00 Family

Check one:
 ___ I would like my contact information included in a membership list that will be distributed only to the members.
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Contact me concerning volunteer opportunities I've checked below:
 DBG Volunteer Sundays ___
 Water Plants booth, DBG May Sale ___
 Hudson Gardens ___
 CWGS Plant Sale (June) ___
 Pond Tour (July) ___
 Water Blossom Festival (August) ___

Note: Your newsletter will be made available to you electronically unless you check otherwise below.
 ___ I request to receive a paper copy of the newsletter

THISYEAR

A calendar of CWGS Activities and Events:

May 19: Potluck Dinner and Plant Swap
Gates Hall, Denver Botanic Gardens
6:00PM – Potluck dinner
7:00PM – Plant Swap

June 12: CWGS Annual Plant Sale, DBG
June 26: Waterside Program on turtles at Majestic View, Arvada
July 23: CWGS Annual Pond Tour and Picnic
Aug. 6: Water Blossom Festival – Dan Johnson speaks on the
place of water in the dry landscape, DBG
Aug. 28: Waterside meeting, Coleman home, Longmont
Sept. 15: Potluck dinner and Annual Board Elections, DBG
Oct. 20: Potluck dinner and meeting, DBG
Dec. 15: Holiday Banquet, DBG



From...

TheWaterGarden
c/o Journal Editor
1210 Clayton Street
Denver, CO 80206-3214

The Colorado Water Garden Society (CWGS) is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization founded in 1983 to encourage appreciation and interest in the use of water in the landscape.

To learn more, visit us at
www.colowatergardensociety.org

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