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Potluck Dinner & Program on Filtration

**Thursday, March 22 in Plant
Society Building, DBG**

**6:00 Potluck dinner
7:00 Program**

Online at:
www.colowatergardensociety.org

With Tea Comes Sympathy...

... and a little advice on how to avoid the tea in the first place

Ponds, particularly those that contain fish as well as plants, often emerge from winter with a variety of problems ranging from brown water to under-oxygenation. Correcting these problems quickly is important to heading off another, later pond pest – algae – that can rob the pond of oxygen and in extreme cases cause die-off of fish.

A lot of commercial products, chemicals, and recommended procedures address murky water quality, but one of the most sustainable (and inexpensive) approaches is to improve your filtration.

The Club's first program of this season will cover filtration in all its aspects. Join us on Thursday March 22 for a general discussion of the topic. Club President Bob Hoffman will lead a "round robin" on filtration and water clarity. We'll elaborate on the thoughts initiated in this issue of The WaterGarden. (See related articles on pages 5 and 6.)

Approaches to dealing with poor water quality are nearly as numerous as water gardeners. Sharing your experience and learning from your neighbor is a great way to obtain a general overview of the reasons for improving filtration, the underlying biologic principles, options for mechanical and biologic controls, as well as commercial approaches.

An additional attraction of the March meeting: Member Ken Burkert will share his tips for growing lilies in pots without soil media.

Our program will begin at 7:00 on Thursday March 22 in the new Plant Society Building at DBG. But join us first for a delicious pot-luck beginning at 6:00 PM. Bring your favorite dish. The club provides drinks, plates and utensils.

To access the Plant Society Building, enter the staff drive from York Street (on the north side of the buildings and conservatory.) Follow the drive to its termination at the west end of the new greenhouse complex. Ahead of you, you'll see a small wood-framed building with a gambrel roof. Parking is immediately adjacent. The York street staff entrance will remain open past 7:00 PM. There is no entrance fee.

2012 Board of Directors:**President**

Bob Hoffman	303.978.0124
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Vice President

Vicki Aber	303.423.9216
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Secretary

Dorothy Martinez	303.279.3137
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Treasurer

Jim Wohlenhaus	303.429.9119
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Marge Oleson	303.989.4809
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Lynn Jewett	303.671.7964
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Fran Hoffman	303.978.0124
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Ben Coleman	303.772.7220
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2012 Committee and Event Chairs:**Newsletter Editor**

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Membership

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Dorothy Martinez	303.279.3137

Publicity & Outreach

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Marge Oleson	303.989.4809

Get Wet Event

Jim Arneill	303.843.9619
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CWGS June Plant Sale

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Janet Bathurst	303.421.1144
Dorothy Martinez	303.279.3137

Pond Tour / Picnic

Dorothy Martinez	303.279.3137
Bob Hoffman	303.978.0124
Fran Hoffman	303.978.0124

Water Blossom Festival

Marge Oleson	303.989.4809
Bill Powell	303.355.8098

Holiday Banquet

Dorothy Martinez	303.279.3137
Michael Weber	303.322.6769
Sandy Berenbaum	303.322.6769

WebPage / Archives

Dorothy Martinez	303.279.3137
Bill Bathurst	303.421.1144
Janet Bathurst	303.421.1144

DBG Plant Sale & Volunteers

Bill Powell	303.355.8098
Marge Oleson	303.989.4809

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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 January 1, 2012
\$10,845.26

Remember...

Unless you have specifically requested receipt of The WaterGarden in paper form, you will receive it electronically.

To request a change in delivery, report a change in email, or to report a problem with downloading of the electronic journal, reply to Dorothy Martinez:

Dorothy.Martinez@colowatergardensociety.org.



Bob Hoffman, pictured above with his wife Fran, was elected President for 2012/2013.

Fran was also elected as a Member-At-Large of the CWGS Board.

President's Letter

President Bob Hoffman talks about the Club's history as we begin our 29th year!

As we start the 29th year of CWGS as an organized society the names have changed, but the purpose is unchanged. CWGS is still a water garden society with an aim to increase the awareness and education for water gardening.

In 1983 when CWGS registered as a plant society with the Royal Horticultural Society in England the founding members were told that there was no other water garden society registered with the Royal Horticultural Society, then the principal registrar of gardening societies worldwide. Does this mean CWGS was the first water garden society in the world? It could be, and we assume that to be the case.

Many of the events that CWGS participates in today have a long tradition. The Club's effort to support and staff the Aquatics Division of the DBG Plant Sale and volunteering at DBG with the spring and fall are but two examples. Even this newsletter is long standing since it's inception in 1990.

Today, the CWGS board has some new faces, some that have resurfaced, and some that remained. I, Bob Hoffman, want to thank all the Board members for their time and energy. As President I have resurfaced since my last presidency in 1999. Vicki Aber has accepted the Vice President position. Dorothy Martinez remains as Secretary. Jim Wohlenhaus will remain as Treasurer. Two new members at large are Fran Hoffman and Ben Coleman. A big thank you to Brenda Parsons Hier, Peter Hier, Marge Oleson, Jim Arneill, Bill Powell, Mike Weber and Lynn Jewett for continuing on as members at large.



Len and Doris Freestone on the occasion of their election as "Lifetime Members of CWGS" in December of 2010.

Len served as Treasurer on the CWGS Board. Doris was also on the Board. Both Len and Doris have been members of the Club and volunteers to Denver Botanic Gardens for decades.

In Memoriam

Longtime CWGS Member Len Freestone Dies

Len Freestone died at home on March 4 following an extended illness. As was announced via the CWGS website, Doris Freestone, their daughters Katrina and Danita, and the extended family hosted a celebration of Len's life on March 10.

Len's many contributions to CWGS, to Denver Botanic Gardens, and to the craft of water gardening, particularly in the area of tropical waterlily propagation, are numerous. A future issue of TheWaterGarden will have extensive coverage of Len's accomplishments. In the meantime the CWGS Board and the horticultural staff at Denver Botanic Gardens will be considering ways in which to recognize Len's importance to the Club, to the Gardens, and to water gardening. If you have thoughts in that area, please direct them to Club President Bob Hoffman (303 987-0124 koihoffman@yahoo.com).

If you wish to express condolences to Doris and the family, direct your cards to Doris Freestone 8831 State Highway 86, Franktown CO 80116.

Transition at “TheWaterGarden”

By Bill Powell

This will be my last issue as Editor of the “TheWaterGarden.” I’ve enjoyed my tenure. I stepped in as a temporary bridge following Mike and Cyndie Thomas’ many years doing the newsletter. Rather quickly my editorship grew from the expected few months to years. So, as Mike, Cyndie, and many of our past editors will tell you, producing the newsletter while vexing at times, is also sufficiently rewarding to hold one’s attention much longer than expected.

Dorothy Martinez will be taking over as Editor with the April Newsletter. Dorothy, as you may know, is a CWGS Board Member and officer (Secretary.) She’s also our website guru. Since the newsletter is now produced both online and as hard copies for Members who prefer that option, Dorothy is in an ideal position to blend the online web material with the monthly newsletters. That is IF we don’t burn Dorothy out! She’s heavily involved in many other aspects of the Club’s operations and events.

I hope to continue to write for the TheWaterGarden from time to time, so look for my by-line to appear. In addition, we’re striving to involve other members, both new and seasoned, to provide articles. Please help Dorothy and the Club to continue the quality and diversity of our newsletter!

Get Wet to Kick off Water Gardening Season with Presentation on Waterlily Hybrids

By Jim Arneill

Be sure to mark your calendar for Tuesday, April 10, when Get Wet kicks off the water gardening season with an exciting program in Mitchell Hall at Denver Botanic Gardens from 6:30-9:00 pm. This year’s event will feature a presentation by Tamara Kilbane - “Exciting New Developments in Waterlily Hybridization.” Tamara is the Senior Horticulturist of the Aquatic Collection at Denver Botanic Gardens. She will oversee the IWGS New Waterlily Competition at the Gardens after having done so also at the Sarah P. Duke Gardens in Durham, North Carolina.

Get Wet will also provide an opportunity to learn about and purchase two CWGS member favorite hardy plants that bloom early in the season. See Dorothy Martinez’ article that follows at the bottom of this page.

Representatives from many local garden centers and pond businesses will be on hand to share resources and answer questions. They will be available from 6:30-7:00 and 8:30-9:00 in the back of Mitchell Hall, with the program featuring Tamara’s presentation from 7:00-8:30.

We hope you will join us for a fun evening that will be entertaining and educational on Tuesday, April 10!

Marsh Marigolds and Water Hawthorn to be marketed in April.

By Dorothy Martinez

It may still be winter, but the beginning of the water gardening season is not far off. Indeed, certain plants are only available while they remain dormant. To enjoy their blooms in spring, early summer, and fall you need to start early.

CWGS will be offering early-blooming Marsh Marigolds (*Caltha palustris*) and early and late blooming Water Hawthorns (*Aponogeton distachyos*) for sale at our Annual Get Wet event scheduled for Tuesday, April 10th from 6:30 pm through 9:00 pm.

There will be a limited number of each plant for sale at Get Wet on a first come, first served basis after the program scheduled for 8:15 pm.

Please note all plants are subject to availability.

The cost is as follows:

Marsh Marigolds - \$10.00/plant

Water Hawthorns - \$10.00/plant

One Water Gardener's Thoughts On Filtration

Bob Hoffman shares his experience

“Filtration: ...to remove by passing through a filter.”

In the world of water gardening filtration is the process of removing unwanted sediment. How this is done is wide and varied. Very few people use the same technique, but in one way or the other we all use a mechanical or biological system.

Some filtration systems are more involved than others. Water gardens by themselves are pretty easy to maintain, but when you add fish the game changes. When I first started my water garden I had no filter. At the end of the season I drained the pond, cleaned it, and filled it up again.

A few years went by and I wanted a waterfall, but it wasn't very big. The idea of having a waterfall naturally led to having two small pools that fed into each other. So I now needed a pump to lift the water and make the waterfall (the size of a pump is another area to explore, but not here).

With the addition of the pump I was in the market for a cheap mechanical filter design. I made my own up-flow barrel filter out of a plastic 55 gallon barrel. The filter has a stand pipe in the middle of the barrel. The pipe sits on a platform about 8 inches above the bottom of the barrel. The remainder of the barrel is filled with different sized rocks (with the largest on the bottom of the platform.) The barrel has a drain on the bottom and an outlet at the top. The water from the pump flows in through the pipe and down to near the bottom of the barrel where it exits the pipe and then flows back up to the top through the rocks (thus making it an up-flow filter).

The water from my filter flows into the top pool, then into the middle pool, and finally into the water garden. Both of the upper pools act as biological filters when plants are added to them. This filter has worked just fine to keep the water clear, but it does very little to pick up the dirt left by the plants so I still drain the pond and clean the bottom. I have no bottom drain.

This could have been the end of my filtration story, but my son decided we needed a Koi pond. You may be thinking, “What has a Koi pond have to do with a water garden?” Well, I couldn't let my Koi swim in a pool by themselves; they needed plants. I added Lilies, lotus, and marginals to the Koi pond (how well they coexist is another story).

I constructed my Koi pond to be higher than my water garden and connected the two with water that flows from a water garden skimmer and a river to return the water. I also, added a bottom drain to the Koi pond (the Koi pond has never been completely drained). My first attempt to filter my Koi pond (and also the water going into my water garden since they are connected) was to use a bead filter. This worked OK, but when I got string algae it clogged the small basket filter preceding the pump. I then added a turbo vortex pre-filter ahead of the pump and matters improved.

These filtration improvements have produced crystal clear water despite the fact that the fish load (number and size of fish) far exceeds recommendations. An UV Ultra-violet light that I bought along the way sits on a bench unused (five years now). I have no problem with green water.

There are many things I have learned over the years about filtration, but the one to remember is that when it comes to filtration bigger really IS better.

Bob Hoffman



A quick filter to remove tannins from your pond water:

By Bill Powell

Warmer weather lures water gardeners outside to check on their ponds. Often all they see is their own reflection in the dark water that's been "steeping" brown tannin from leaves over the winter. Even with repeated nettings of leaves, those few leaves you miss - particularly those that come from larger hardwoods like oak or maple - are sufficient to dye the water. While the water may still be healthy for the fish since there wasn't enough detritus in the pond to decompose and rob the water column of oxygen, brown water isn't very attractive and frustrates seeing your fish at just the time you'd like to be checking on their health.

There's a fix for brown water - one that's simple, doesn't involve chemicals, and which can clear a small pond in a couple of days. John Mirgon, one of the founders of CWGS discovered the uses of a small bucket-sized temporary filter. His solution, which Club member Cyndie Thomas dubbed the "Mirgon Filter" is easy to construct. You probably already have all the components.

My interpretation of the Mirgon Filter uses a 30 lb. plastic commercial cat litter container, but a household bucket will work as well. The handle conveniently suspends the bucket from a rod that spans across the corner of my pond. In the bottom of the bucket I set a sump pump. You could also rig your regular pump to work. Around the bottom inlet to my pump I place fairly large stones or bricks the size of cobbles to a depth of three to five inches. Next comes a layer of finer stone, and then pea gravel near the surface.

The pump is essentially buried in stone. Only the pump's top and a flexible garden hose coming from the pump extend above the stone. On top of the stone I place layers of spun polyurethane batting (fiber-fill) of the sort that's used to stuff pillows. Make sure the filter material has not been treated with chemicals. On top of the fiberfill I place a few more cobbles to hold the fill in place.

Hanging the bucket handle over a rod that spans a corner of my pond, the lip of the bucket is just low enough to allow water to run into the bucket. The water sinks over the edge of the rim to fill all the voids between the stones, and when the pump is turned on the water is pulled downward continuously between the filter stones and media. Water is returned to the pond by the hose which has the additional benefit of adding oxygen to the water when it spews back into the pond.

My pond, which is about one thousand gallons in capacity, will usually clear with operation of the bucket filter during the daylight over a couple of days. I don't run the filter at night as a precaution against the hose being disturbed and possibly emptying the unattended pond, although I've never had that problem develop since I generally wire the hose to the rod in such a way that animals could not disturb it.

If my water discoloration is particularly bad, I sometimes change out the fiber fill once for fresh, but most years a single bed of filter materials remains effective for the couple of days it takes for the water to clear.

Spring Volunteer sessions to begin soon at DBG

The Club has a long history of volunteering at Denver Botanic Gardens. In the spring we assemble for up to six Sundays to help with divisions of over-wintered specimens and planting of the Aquatic display. In fall, we reverse the process as we prepare the exterior collections for winter. Some CWGS-solicited volunteers even work year around carrying out specific tasks supporting the Gardens' extraordinary Aquatic collection.

Soon the 2012 spring sessions will begin. Seasoned and inexperienced volunteers are welcomed to participate. It's a great way to learn the basics of water gardening. We usually work for a couple of hours, weather cooperating, on Sunday mornings. Tasks can include division of hardy waterlilies and lotus, divisions of hardy and tropical marginals, and planting of newly acquired species.

For more information or to join the volunteers, call Tamara Kilbane @ 720 865-3556.



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We also run single-event ads.

*For details regarding rates, sizes, and formats of ads, contact Bill Powell
wbpow@comcast.net*

Membership Application

Make checks payable to:
Colorado Water Garden Society

Return this form with your payment to:
CWGS Membership
100 Glencoe St.
Denver, CO 80220

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP _____

Home Phone: (_____) _____

Email* _____

* Required for electronic receipt of newsletter.
(note: CWGS does not share or sell email addresses)

____ 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.

____ I do not want my contact information published in the membership list.

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

THIS YEAR

A calendar of CWGS Activities and Events:

March 22: Potluck and Filtration program
New Plant Society Building
Denver Botanic Gardens

6:00 PM - Potluck dinner

7:00 PM – Round-Robin discussion of filtration also special presentation by Ken Burkert on growing lilies without soil

April 10: Get Wet - Mitchell Hall, DBG 6:30 – 9:00 PM

May 17: Potluck & Annual Plant Swap – Plant Society Building, DBG 6:00

June 3: Annual Plant Sale – West Terrace, DBG, 10:00 – 2:00

June 23: Pondside Program – Hoffman Residence, 2:00

July 21: Annual Pond Tour & Picnic

August 5: Pondside Program – Neupert Residence, 2:00

August 18: Water Blossom Festival, DBG 10:00 – 2:00 PM

Sept. 20: Potluck & Annual Board Elections – Plant Society Building, DBG 6:00 PM

Oct. 18: Potluck & Planning Meeting – Plant Society Building, DBG 6:00 PM

Dec. 20: Holiday Banquet and Volunteer Recognition – Plant Society Building, DBG 6:00 PM



Colorado Water Garden Society

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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