

Coming Events

April 9
SuperSmart Sunday
Denver Botanic Gardens, Main Pool
9 am - 12 Noon

May 7
Tagawa Garden Center,
“Plants for Colorado
Water Gardens”

June 10 (Workday), June
11 (Sale), Plant Sale and
Swap, Falls by Fox
2001 E. 58th Ave.
Denver

July (date TBA)
Pond Tour/Picnic

August (date TBA)
Water Blossom Festival,
DBG

September 10
Annual Meeting/
Elections,
Morrison Center, DBG

December 2
Holiday Party, Morrison
Center, DBG



The Water Garden

Volume 23 Number 2

March 2006

Making sense of scents

Cyndie Thomas

Along with the growth of water gardening in the landscape, so it would appear is the interest in marketing the sensual odors from flowers grown in the water.

What do shower gels, body splashes and fabric softeners now have in common? Waterlily scent. Over the last two years there has been an insurge of products claiming to match the scent of “waterflowers.” There are ones claiming to be from extracts of the Lotus (Nelumbo) and Waterlily (Nymphaea) flowers. Just a few years ago there would have been a limited number of persons in the general populace that might be familiar with what each smells like, let alone generate a marketable interest.

The uses of perfumed scents are documented in times of Ancient Egypt. Perfumes were applied as oil-based salves or liquids. Incense was given the form of small pellets which could be burned. “Lotus of the Nile” or “Blue Lotus” (*Nymphaea caerulea*) was thought to

be used as an aphrodisiac and was thought to have a hypnotic sedative effect. Drawings of the flower can be seen in hieroglyphic writings from as far back as the First Dynasty of Ancient Egypt depicting religious purposes and burial rituals representing the circle of life.



Both the waterlily and lotus were seen by ancient cultures as being symbolic of creation. The Egyptians saw that the blue waterlily opened up each morning, with its intense golden center set against the blue petals, seemingly an imitation of the sky

that would greet the sun, releasing sweet perfume. Each afternoon, they would close again, only to open again the next day. The flower was, therefore, firmly linked to the rising and setting of the sun and, thus, to the sun god and the story of creation.

The religious significance of the flower was great - many columns of the Egyptian temples had water lily capitals crowning them. In Indian culture, the lotus is symbolic of



turn to page 5

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Name(s) _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone () _____

E-Mail _____

Signature _____

Date _____

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

Contact me concerning volunteer opportunities I have checked below:

Plant Exchange/Sale (June) _____ Water Garden Spectacular (August) _____

Pond Tour (July) _____ Holiday Party (Dec.) _____ DBG Volunteer _____

Making an essential oil

continued from page 5

- Hammer or wooden kitchen mallet.
- 2 wide-mouth glass jars. After you empty a jar, wash it thoroughly and it is ready for use. You could also buy mason jars or some similar type of jar, as long as it has a wide-mouth top.
- Funnel
- Amber, Smoked or Cobalt Blue glass bottles with a stopper
- Cheesecloth or Cotton Gauze

Each day for four days, place 1 cup of flowers (1/4 cup of herbs or chopped fruit peel) in the plastic bag, close the bag and lightly tap the materials in the bag to bruise them slightly. Do not beat the material into a pulp; this is a gentle process.

Place the sweet almond oil and the flowers, herbs or citrus peel into one wide-mouth glass jar, replace the top and gently shake to mix. Make sure your materials have been saturated in the oil. Leave the bottle in a warm place, perhaps in your kitchen.

Each day, using the cheesecloth as a strainer, transfer the oil from one bottle to the other, collecting your material in the cheesecloth. Squeeze the cheesecloth to transfer as much of the oil as possible into the second bottle.

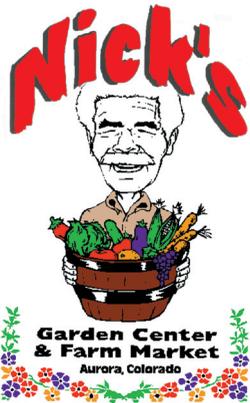
Throw away the old material and repeat the bruising procedure with a fresh batch of your flowers, herbs or citrus peel. Add the new material to the oil and gently shake.

When the four days have elapsed, strain the oil through the cheesecloth one final time and, using the funnel, transfer the oil into the colored glass bottles. Place the stopper on the bottles. Congratulations - You have now made your own essential oil.

The shelf life for your essential oil is 6 - 12 months if kept in a dry, dark, cool spot.

In a future issue, read about medicinal uses of water plant leaves and roots.

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A Message From The New Kid On The Block

Gary Blubaugh, President

***“If we had no Winter, then
Spring would not be so
much a pleasant surprise.”***

author unknown

Couch Ponderers get ready. Some of us have already started to ready our water features for spring. For my own part, I replaced a faulty pump. Wouldn't you know that it failed four months after the warranty lapsed-*!!#*

I would like to thank everyone who attended our “Get Wet! Water Gardening Fun In 2006” event. Kudos to Jim Arneill and Vicki Aber for their hard work in planning the event. CWGS thanks Keith Funk of KEZW's GardenWise™ Guys for providing us with an entertaining and informative evening. I can't get out of my

mind the picture of chopped-up fish floating down his stream. If you did not attend, you missed seeing Cyndie and Mike Thomas' movie “Water Gardening in Colorado” and whetted our appetite with beautiful water features from past CWGS Pond Tours. Was anyone left pondering a new idea for his or her water feature?

CWGS Board Members gave an overview and invited everyone to participate in the upcoming events planned for 2006. Check what is planned in the “Coming Events” of the newsletter. Thanks to Marge Oleson-many of us received tips on how to separate and repot water plants. Joe Mascrenas also shared his expertise in photography, and encouraged us to try and capture the beauty of our beloved water feature. Joe Tomocik, DBG Water Garden Curator, described the volunteer opportunities available to at the Water Gardens. Joe also thanked members who filled out Volunteer Applications to be a part of the Spring DBG Work Crew.

It was nice to see familiar faces and new ones. I'm excited about being able to work this year with folks who share a love of water gardening. Finally, sad-heartedly, I apologize to the 10 people who did not win a door prize. Thanks to Keith and Cyndie, many who attended “Get Wet! Water Gardening Fun In 2006” actually walked away with a door prize!

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Things that Need Doing – Volunteering and learning at DBG

Each spring a former neighbor of mine peers out the kitchen door that opens onto her tangled “back forty”; she inspects the heaps of fallen twigs, the accumulated leaves, and she sighs: “I just love nature. Why, I don’t see a *single* thing that needs doing!”

Ruby isn’t blind or lazy; she’s being perversely literal. Of course, Ruby doesn’t see just *one* thing; she sees dozens of tasks calling for attention. And, she’s determined not to let the challenge get her down. Twenty minutes after her kitchen door pronouncement, she’ll be working happily in her garden.

Soon the CWGS Sunday volunteers will cast our eyes about the water gardens at Denver Botanic Gardens (DBG.) Like Ruby we’re likely to spy a laundry list of things “that need doing.” Tasks will include organization and clean up, but also fun techniques of division and propagation that herald a colorful summer aquatics display.

For more than twenty years CWGS has solicited and helped to coordinate volunteers under the direction of Joe Tomocik, DBG’s curator of Water Gardens. This spring we’re expanding our educational outreach and offering additional flexibility for those of you who are interested in learning by volunteering, but for whom Sunday is not an option.

Sunday Sessions at DBG

Weather permitting, our regular CWGS-sponsored Sunday sessions will begin April 2 in the DBG greenhouses and adjoin-

ing work yard. For six Sunday mornings, volunteers at all experience levels will work and learn together. We’d love to introduce newcomers to the fun of water gardening. Why not join us this spring? In addition to learning and camaraderie, we offer free donuts!

SuperSmart Sunday – Water Gardening 101

For those of you who are new to water gardening, or may be intimidated by the prospect of joining an experienced crew of volunteers, start your learning at our SuperSmart Sunday educational day on Sunday, April 9. Demonstrations of technique will accompany hands-on learning. We’ll also offer behind-the-scenes tours of DBG’s aquatics program and facilities. The fun begins at 9:00 and runs until noon.

New Saturday Sessions at DBG

This year Joe Tomocik is offering Saturday volunteer opportunities in addition to the Sunday sessions. Beginning Saturday, April 1, Joe will personally coordinate and train volunteers in all aspects of water gardening as practiced at DBG. For those of you who cannot make the CWGS-sponsored Sundays, these new Saturday sessions offer an option to learn and practice your aquatic technique while helping out with DBG’s summer display.

For details regarding these opportunities and to sign-up, contact Bill Powell
(303) 355-8098
wbpow@comcast.net

Fish need their vitamins and minerals, too

Mike Thomas, Editor

At first glance, feeding fish seems to be a simple proposition. In an aquarium in your family room, it might be if all you have to really worry about is the most convenient time of day for you feed them, or how much to give them.

In a water garden, however, feeding cold-water fish can become the source of heated arguments and, if you read the literature, is now a science you must be able to work with. What most of us really need to know is all right here.

Your two most important goals when feeding fish are to provide adequate nutrition while reducing the bioload on the pond from the fish waste. To reduce disease in your fish, you must provide them the same complete and balanced diet we should all be eating. Multi-vitamins, Vitamin C and minerals help to improve resistance to disease and help fish live long, healthy lives. Many fish foods also contain corn or corn starch, products to be avoided if possible, chief culprits in clouding the water.

WHEN to feed your fish depends on one thing - water temperature. Fish have different nutritional requirements at different temperatures. At water temps above 50° F, fish can be fed up to four times a day, but only as much as they can eat in two minutes. Waste and pond pollution will be reduced if small portions are provided, and all the food is eaten.

During the winter, when temps fall below 42° F, DO NOT feed the fish anything. Fish are dormant much of the year when low temperatures exist, and can easily live off what their bodies have stored, or what is available underwater.

Never overfeed your fish. Too much food will pollute your pond and create other problems you will have to deal with. A simple rule of thumb we can all relate to is this: the more food you intake, the more waste you excrete. Too much food at a feeding will eventually be eaten, but at the cost of unhealthy fish and water quality problems, neither of which can be resolved quickly.



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12-Step Program for Plantaholics

adapted from a program by Ken Druse, www.kendruse.com

1. Three strikes and you're out - if you can't get it to grow, get it out of the garden.
2. Decide where a plant will go BEFORE you buy it.
3. Read the descriptions and labels, but look behind the hype and fancy terms.
4. If the only attraction of a plant is its novelty, forget about it.
5. Fill out those catalog order forms you've collected, but don't mail them.
6. Buy from outlets that have sold you the best and healthiest plants you have in the garden. You can still test that new plant or supplier each year with a few items.
7. Plant plants that ultimately contribute to the overall design theme of your garden and its surroundings. If it doesn't fit, don't plant it.
8. When you find a plant you want, buy more than one and group them for a more impressive display, if they grow!
9. Know what planting zone you live in, and buy plants to fit. Plants from other zones usually end up dead. Find out what zone it grows in before it leaves the store.
10. Try a few new plants each year that are variations of plants you know have grown in your garden.
11. Set a budget before you do anything else, then tell the truth as you revise it! When you shop, don't overdue it.
12. Provide a planting area for all those plants you bought anyway, after ignoring the previous 11 steps.



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Making sense of scents

continued from front page

rebirth, but in addition to its religious meaning, the lotus is also a symbol of all that is true, good and beautiful, representing good fortune, peace and enlightenment.

Today we find that in the waterlily family, the tropical species and cultivars are more odoriferous. St. Louis Gold being one of the most prominent in releasing its scent. The hardy waterlily species plant *Nymphaea odorata* is referred to as the fragrant waterlily. It is easily identified based on its intense odor (thus its name), nearly circular pads (not heart-shaped) and its rhizome structure.



Water Hawthorne (*Aponogeton distachyus*) is another rooted, floating-leaved water plant that has very fragrant blossoms, as does the Spider Lily (*Hymenocallis carolin-*

iana) with its star-shaped delicate white flowers that is an emergent plant.

Priestesses richly adorned,
 Anointed with myrrh, perfumed
 with lotus,
 Their heads garlanded with
 wreaths,
 All together drunk with wine,
 Fragrant with the plants of Punt,
 They danced in beauty, doing my
 heart's wish,
 Their rewards were on their limbs.

Tomb of Wennefer M. Lichtheim
 Ancient Egyptian Literature
 Vol. 3, p.56

Make your own essential oil

If you have a flower or herb garden, or have access to freshly cut flowers or herbs, you can easily make your own essential oils using sweet almond oil.

I prefer to use Aura Cacia sweet almond oil with Vitamin E. It is a high quality product that is readily available at most health food stores. Vitamin E is useful as a natural preservative.

Assemble the following tools and supplies:

- ½ cup of sweet almond oil
- 1 cup of tightly packed flowers or 1/4 cup of packed fresh herbs or 1/4 cup of chopped fruit peel, such as orange, grapefruit, lime or lemon. You will need a total of 4 cups of freshly-cut flowers or 1 cup of herbs or chopped fruit peel. Thoroughly rinse your materials in cool water prior to using.
- Plastic zip-lock bags. The bags with the zipper attachment that runs across the top to securely close the bag are preferred.

turn to page 8