



# The Water Garden

Volume 20 Number 1

March 2003

## CWGS to celebrate its 20th year

Throughout this upcoming season we will be looking back and planning for the future as we celebrate the Colorado Water Garden Society's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Twenty years is quite a milestone for any organization. In the April, 1985 newsletter, one of our organization's founders, John Mirgon, wrote that he was pleased the group was still in operation and growing in membership as they started a new year. He quipped – "Who would have thought?" John has often recounted it was always a concern that the organization wouldn't survive, as each year many associations are started and don't make it. When asked recently if he was surprised the organization had made it to 20 years, he replied with a laugh in his voice; "Yeh, really. Most hobbies only last about 10 years."

It was March 13, 1983, at a Denver Botanic Gardens' class on water lilies taught by Joe Tomocik, that the Water Garden Society blossomed. Based on a keen interest in sharing information, eight individuals worked together to start the society. The Society's first meeting, after inviting the general public to join, was held April 24, 1983. The flyer read, in part: **Colorado Water Garden Society – It's New . . . It's Here . . . It's for You.** The new society grew from less than a dozen members to nearly 30 in two years. Next month read about the growth and accomplishments of the Society over the past 20 years. We hope we can have a reunion of sorts with old members who attend infrequently (they know it all) and current members. We'll honor our oldest water gardeners, and our youngest.

At this 20<sup>th</sup> year benchmark, we want to assess where we are and gain new insights as to where you would like us to be as an organization as we move forward in time. Your Board of Directors has created a survey for each member to complete. To have this be of any benefit, we need everyone's input. We'd like your criticisms. Be brutal, we need to know what you think. A sprinkling of

kudos would be okay too, but don't sugar coat your comments.

YOU WILL FIND THE SURVEY ENCLOSED IN THIS ISSUE. You can respond using the enclosed copy or complete the survey online at our web site. The address is: [www.colowatergardensociety.org](http://www.colowatergardensociety.org) Select "my opinion counts" on the home page. If you desire to complete the enclosed printed copy, mail it to: CWGS Future c/o 1023 S. Kittredge Way, Aurora, CO 80017-3003, or you can also bring it with you to the March meeting. All who respond will receive a special FREE plant which will be available at the June Sale.

This anniversary year will be an exciting one, with great programs, fun activities, and hands-on educational opportunities. It will also be a trying year with the anticipated restrictions for water use due to the continuing drought. Together, we can all help each other enjoy what water gardening has to offer. Come join us as we celebrate our birthday!

### First meeting of 2003

## Ponds, wildlife collide during drought

Low snow pack and the continuation of drought conditions into 2003 may well impact water gardeners with unwanted visitors. There is no one more disheartened than a pond owner who finds scattered, half-eaten fish in his yard, or the majority of fish mysteriously gone from the pond.

Finding the pond in total disarray, with pots overturned, marginal plants pushed off shelves, and rocks around the pond moved, can even raise the eyebrow of a true wildlife enthusiast. NIMBY - "not in my back yard" will be the battle cry.

Most pond owners can relay a story about their encounters with wildlife. It could be one about deer, raccoons,

*Continued on next page*

Urban Wildlife Rescue, Inc.



Established in 1991

## Officers and Committee Chairs for 2003

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### Secretary

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#### Volunteer Coordinator

Lowell Coon 303.427.8532

#### Publicity

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#### Speakers Bureau

Bob Hoffman 303.978.0124

#### DBG May Plant & Book Sale

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Carla Littlefield 303.399.7946

#### CWGS June Plant Sale

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Stan Skinger 303.237.0071

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#### July Pond Tour & Picnic

Craig Russell 303.443.7877

#### Newsletter Editor

Michael Thomas 303.755.1885

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## Ponds, wildlife can collide during times of drought

*Continued from front page*

skunks, squirrels, snakes, heron, or the clever fox. Wildlife has a common need—water. Second to the life-sustaining water you may, without knowing it, be generously offering, is food and shelter. All three of these elements make a home.

Dry creek beds due to drought will increase the probability that wildlife will be searching for more desirable areas to inhabit. Learning about the strengths and weaknesses of the various wildlife species can assist you in excluding them, or at least minimizing their damage to your habitat.



Jack Murphy of Urban Wildlife Rescue will be our guest speaker on March 9. Murphy is the co-founder and Executive Director of Urban Wildlife Rescue, Inc. in Denver, and is a licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator. He is a Wildlife Control Operator who solves wildlife conflicts using only humane and non-lethal methods. Murphy is the author of "Humane Solutions to Wildlife Problems," a self-help guide for those who wish to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. He has written articles and lectured on numerous topics, including Wildlife Rehabilitation, Living With Wildlife, Wildlife Conflict Resolution, Humane Capture and Handling Techniques, and more.

## A Thank You

Before my tenure at the Denver Botanic Gardens comes to a close, there are several CWGS members I would like to thank.

First, Lois Mayerchak, who was willing to share her vast knowledge of tropical waterlilies with me. She never quit teaching me and for that I am forever grateful.

John Bayard, a great volunteer and angler, I would like to thank for showing me the wonders and eccentricities of the carnivorous plants. We could all learn from his attention to detail.

Bill Powell is another wonderful volunteer. His excellent job with the conservatory pool and his

meticulous record-keeping and scientific approach to the Victorian Water Lily has been a real asset to the water gardens.

When speaking of Victorias, one name invariably comes up - Nancy Styler. Without her we wouldn't have a single Victoria or Euyrale to show off.

In closing, I would like to say that the moments spent with each person are something I will always treasure. I couldn't have imagined a better group of volunteers. It has been truly inspiring.

I had a wonderful time. Thanks so much!

Ryan Neeper

*Blast from the past...*

## Indoor Water Gardens

*Source: The Indoor Water Gardener's How-To Handbook, Peter Loewer - Reprinted from CWGS Newsletter, September 1984*

A host of grasses from marshy and swampy areas will last a season in the house. Water Chestnuts (*Trapa natans*), Water Fern (*Ceratopteris thalictroides*), and Parrot's Feather (*Myriophyllum proserpinacoides*) are fresh and exciting in bowls of water.

How about an under-water garden? The Amazon Sword Plant (*Echnidorus brevipedidellatus*), Cape Fear Spatterdock (*Nuphar sagittifolia*), or the common Eel Grass (*Valisneriatorta*) are

all common under-water plants that can be found at aquarium and pet stores. They require very little care, except for removal of leaves that have turned brown and an adjustment of light conditions (no direct sun).

While looking for these, search out the Madagascar Lace Plant or Laceleaf (*Aponogeton fenestralis*), a large and very beautiful submerged plant with leaves resembling crochet or macrame embroidery. Do not put it in direct sun, use soft water (below pH7), and never let the temperature go below 65 deg F. Planted with gravel in a cylinder of glass and with the right backlighting, it becomes an art object. The leaves may attain a foot in length. Remember to keep the water clean.

# 2003 Pond Tour going to Lakewood, SW Denver

Once again it is time to begin planning for the summer pond tour. This year seems to be a particularly troubling one due to the drought conditions and water restrictions. However, we all have continuing interest in ponds, their design and perhaps now more than ever their role in conservation.

I am looking for 6-7 ponds to have on the tour that reflect you, the members, and your interests in water features, especially features that contribute to conservation of water. I would like to

concentrate on the Lakewood and Southwest Denver area for the tour.

If you are interested in having your pond on the tour, or know someone you would like to recommend for the tour, contact Craig Russell, 303-443-7877 or [chrussell@msn.com](mailto:chrussell@msn.com).

Members, or non-members, that have their ponds on the tour receive a free membership in the CWGS for one year, and the heartfelt admiration of all who visit and discuss the ponds. The members who have participated in the past have enjoyed the day, even

though they never feel their pond is fully prepared for the visit.

The tour will be Sunday, July 13, and will be followed by our annual picnic. Participants will have a pre-tour of the other ponds on Saturday.

I also need volunteers to assist in selecting the picnic site and making arrangements for the food, chairs and other associated items. Please contact me if you want to assist in any way. Thank you, and I look forward to having a memorable tour in 2003.

## Membership dues process changes this year

A new membership dues renewal program has been instituted this year. To insure more equity for all members, the CWGS Board has decided renewal should be based on the month the member joined. The change is made more manageable by


computers and the member database piloted last year.

Since the inception of the organization, dues have been payable in January. Any members joining after September were carried as members through the following year; member-

ships prior to September were required to be renewed the next January.

To verify the month you joined you can look at the address label on your newsletter. "01" would indicate January, "02" February, and so on. In this issue, all members with "01-03" have received renewal information. A completed application form indicating volunteer interests must accompany all renewals.

We will extend mailing *The Water Garden* for one month after the renewal date, and then your name will be put on the inactive list. The following month after your dues renewal is received you will be sent your name/membership card. Name badge holders will be given at meetings for the card to also serve as your name badge. With future annual renewals, a sticker with the year will be sent.



### Water Garden Problem Solver

**My pond is pea green. What should I do?**

Nothing. This is a temporary situation caused by an algae bloom. Actions you can take to prevent green water in the future are: add more plants for surface coverage and oxygenation; keep fertilizers out of the pond; feed fish less or not at all; don't empty and refill the pond more than once a year; keep the fish population down; protect pond from lawn runoff. All of these suggestions will help with algae, but in the end it is good to remember Algae is a natural and

**I've got a lot of string algae. Is it bad for the fish?**

No. They like to eat it. If you have an excess amount, a round toilet brush can be used to remove it with ease. To minimize growth of string algae decrease decomposing matter in the pond, don't overfertilize pond plants and maintain a healthy balance of fish (over population feeds algae).

*If you have questions regarding water gardening, send them to: [michael.thomas@attbi.com](mailto:michael.thomas@attbi.com). They will be answered in future newsletters.*

**Remember to complete and return your membership survey! The deadline is March 30.**



## DBG spring planting will begin late March

Volunteer work to pot aquatic plants and lilies for the upcoming season at Denver Botanic Gardens will begin the last of March.

Volunteers who expressed an interest in this activity on their membership applications will be contacted by Lowell Coon, CWGS' 2003 Volunteer Coordinator.

Work sessions will be Sunday mornings for five weeks, weather permitting. Volunteers will receive a short educational presentation relating to the work activity, as well as hands-on training, from Joe Tomocik, DBG Director of Aquatics.

If you have not signed up, but would like to volunteer on behalf of CWGS, contact Lowell at 303-427-8532, or e-mail him at [lcoon.co@netzero.net](mailto:lcoon.co@netzero.net).

## Have your pond and yard listed as a Backyard Wildlife Habitat

[www.nwf.org/education](http://www.nwf.org/education)

go to: "backyardhabitat wildlife program"

# Rent this space!

**Reasonable rates on pre-paid advertising space. Hurry!! Space is limited!! Don't wait!**

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**4 issues - \$100  
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303-755-1885**

## Colorado Water Garden Society Membership Survey, March 2003

As CWGS moves into its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the Board of Directors would like to plan for continued improvement and progress. We want to know what you think. Please complete this survey and return it by mail to: CWGS Survey, 1023 S. Kittredge Way, Aurora, CO 80017-3003, **OR** go to the website, [www.colowatergardensociety.org](http://www.colowatergardensociety.org), click on the "my opinion counts" link, and complete the survey online.

Those who submit a survey will receive a special plant at the June Plant Sale. **The deadline for returning the survey is March 30.** Results will be published in the April newsletter.

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1. How many years have you been a member of CWGS?

1-2 years  3-5 years  5-10 years  10+ years

2. Have you ever held a leadership position in CWGS?  YES  NO

Officer  Board Member  Committee Chair  Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why did you originally join CWGS?

Socialization  Learning Opportunities  Information  Membership Benefits

Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Has CWGS met your purpose(s) for joining?

If YES, in what way(s) do you feel it has? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If NO, why do you feel it has not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you attend monthly CWGS meetings?  Often  Seldom  Never

If Seldom or Never, was it due to:  Meeting location  Date or Time  Lack of interest in Program

Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which CWGS meeting(s)/activity(ies) did you attend last year?

March  April  May  June Plant Sale  July Pond Tour  August

September Pond Expo  December Holiday Party

7. Are you aware of the many volunteer activities available through CWGS?  YES  NO

8. Have you ever worked as a CWGS volunteer? (mark all that apply)

DBG Planting  CWGS Plant Sale  Pond Tour  Holiday Party  Program Speaker

DBG Plant Sale  Hudson Gardens  City Park

Other \_\_\_\_\_

9. Is there one change you would like to see in the activity(ies) you are involved in?  YES  NO

If YES, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you interested in working as a CWGS volunteer? (provide contact info below)

CWGS Research Project using your own water garden

One or more of the activities listed above \_\_\_\_\_

11. How much time are you willing to spend on a special project?

A few hours a month     A few days a month     Several days a year

12. What, if anything, would you change in the organization and/or operation of CWGS?

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13. What, if anything, would you change in the meetings and/or programs of CWGS?

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14. Do you read the CWGS Newsletter?     Often     Sometimes     Never

15. Have you visited the CWGS website?     YES     NO

16. Would you like to receive CWGS information via e-mail?     YES     NO

If YES, please provide your contact information below.

17. What can CWGS do to better meet your expectations as a member?

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18. The CWGS Board is considering holding a one-day session with a professional facilitator to discuss the Society's mission, structure, future goals, and activities. Would you like to participate?

YES     NO    If YES, please provide your contact information below.

19. Would you like to be more involved in CWGS?     YES     NO

If YES, please tell us how \_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

# Colorado Water Garden Society - Meeting Dates 2003

**March 9, 2003 - Ponds and Wildlife Management** (Guest: Jack Murphy, Urban Wildlife Rescue, Inc.)  
2:00 pm, Morrison Center, 11th & York St., Denver Botanic Gardens

**April 13, 2003 - Solar Energy and Water Gardens**  
2:00 pm, Waring House, Main Room, 9th & York St., Denver Botanic Gardens

**May 18, 2003 - Drought and Water Gardens** (Guest: Representatives of Denver Water Department)  
2:00 pm, Waring House, Main Room, 9th & York St., Denver Botanic Gardens

**June 1, 2003 - Annual Plant Sale** (9:30 am - Members Only; 10:00 am - Open to the Public)  
Morrison Center, 11th & York St., Denver Botanic Gardens

**July 13, 2003 - Annual Pond Tour**

**August 10, 2003 -**  
2:00 pm, Morrison Center, 11th & York St., Denver Botanic Gardens

**September 20, 2003 - Annual Pond Expo** (Discuss water gardening with contractors and vendors)  
12:00 - 4:00 pm, Mitchell Hall, Denver Botanic Gardens

**December 6, 2003 - Annual Christmas Party**

Board Meetings are held at 12:00 pm prior to general meetings. Members are welcome to attend.



1023 S. Kittredge Way  
Aurora, Colorado 80017

**First Class Mail**

**Please complete and return the enclosed membership survey. First meeting is Sunday, March 9, 2 pm, DBG.**