

Colorado Water Garden Society

The Water Garden

Volume 19 Number 1

March 2002

First meeting of the season, an evening meeting

Open Forum and Call for Members Input and Participation

The first CWGS meeting for 2002 will be Thursday, March 14 at 7 p.m., in the Morrison Center (across from main DBG entrance, 11th & York). By request we are holding the evening meeting in an attempt to have a greater number of attendees.

At this meeting we plan to have an open forum. Get your questions answered on; spring pond start-up, what to look for that might indicate a fish problem, when to repot hardy lilies - virtually anything and

everything you have questions about. We also want your input on projects, our annual sale, future programs, the pond tour and picnic, and newsletter articles.

We would like to know how we could get your involvement. Can we "bribe" you to attend meetings with door prizes . . . better snacks . . . free plants??? What will it take? What can we do to make our meetings more effective? We want you to tell us what you want from your organization,

what you don't like about the organization, and what we can do better.

The board members of CWGS and committee chairpersons are volunteers - people dedicated to sharing their interest, knowledge and time with others. To best meet your interests we need your input at this meeting to have an even more successful year than last. We hope to see you there!

Don't Forget to Renew your CWGS Membership for 2002

Included in this issue you will find the new 2002 membership renewal form. Please complete the membership form and return with your payment of \$10 for an individual membership, or \$15 for a family membership. What a bargain! So you don't miss a newsletter, return your membership renewal by mail prior to April 15, or bring it with you to the March 14 meeting.

On your form please carefully mark which items you would like to

volunteer to assist the organization with. We need your participation in a number of exciting projects this year.

A few of the new projects include:

- We will again make an attempt to return City Park Lily Lake to its 1917 level of beauty, with a full compliment of lilies matching selections to those available during the early 1900's.
- A new adventure this year for volunteers will be assisting with the design and planting of the upper

horseshoe lake at Hudson Gardens. This lake is located east of the existing water garden area.

(continued on page 3)

100 Year History of Water Gardening in Colorado

A brief look at where
and when water
gardening began.

see page 4

Officers and Committee Chairs for 2002



WATERLINE

Cyndie Thomas
President

President

Cyndie Thomas 303 755-1885

Vice President

Stan Skinger 303 237-0071

Secretary

NEEDED

Treasurer

Mike Gibson 303 654-7578

Programs

Bo Lindsey 303 443-7877

Members-at-Large

"Moe" Bolisle 303 744-0745

Zak Volleberg 303 374-9227

Committees:

Membership

NEEDED

Volunteer Coordinator

Damon Ginnow 303 828-2929

Publicity

Nancy Styler 303 850-7150

Archivist

Mary Mirgon 303 922-9559

Speakers Bureau

Bob Hoffman 303 978-0124

DBG May Plant & Book Sale

Carla Littlefield 303 399-7946

Bob Hoffman 303 978-0124

CWGS June Plant Sale

Cyndie Thomas 303 755-1885

Stan Skinger 303 237-0071

Bob Hoffman 303 978-0124

July Pond Tour & Picnic

Craig Russell 303 443-7877

Newsletter Editor

Bob Hoffman 303 978-0124

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I would like to thank all of our 2001 volunteers. Without their dedication and time, we would not have been able to accomplish our goals with such success.

Worthy of special mention are these volunteers who gave an exemplary effort of more than 100 hours:

Volunteer Coordinator Damon Ginnow, with the assistance of Bo Lindsey, worked with Joe Tomocik and coordinated spring Sunday work at Denver Botanic Gardens.

The "sweepers" – Len and Doris Freestone, who nearly each Sunday throughout the season, cleaned up the ponds and plants in all the water displays at DBG. At the close of the season, they tirelessly worked to put the lilies to bed and provided them with a nice winter blanket of pine needle mulch.

The "propagator" – Lois Mayerchek who assists on an ongoing basis caring for and propagating the tropical lily collection at DBG.

The "pot keeper" – Carla Littlefield for caring for the 80+ water plant container gardens displayed throughout the DBG grounds.

The "editor" – Bob Hoffman for putting together our newsletter and mailing it to members. Also his special efforts in directing maintenance of Hudson Gardens' water garden display and the City Park Lily Lake planting this last year.

The "board" - Board Members (Mo Belisle, Mike Gibson, Carla Littlefield, Craig Russell, Stan Skinger, Carol Tuttle) gave numerous hours in assisting with planning meetings, attending meetings, arranging programs, handling our money, coordinating sales and volunteering their time for special projects.

AND our active members who volunteered their time to our successes – ✱

Vicki Aber
Jim Arneill
Tudi Arneill
Lynn Bartlet
John Bayard
Mary Bayard
Ron Bice
Bess Brinkman
Alice Campbell
Edwin Campbell
Steve & Rose Carson
Lanisa Coon
Lowel Coon
Deanne Davis
Larry Davis
Steve Forgy
Doris Freestone
Leonard Freestone
Nancy Ginnow
Linda Glass
Gail Goldberg
Gene Goldberg
Susie Hawes
Bonnie Hayward
Scott Hayward
Rob Hinrichs
Doug Ingenthrom

Tri na Jacobson
Lynn Jewett
Nancy Jewett
Donna Johnson
Robert Johnson
Steve Johnson
John Kerr
Liz Kerr
Laurie Konselle
Ken Lange
Nancy Lee
Bo Lindsey
Carla Littlefield
Bill McBee
Bob Mayerchak
Lois Mayerchak
Mary Mirgon
John Mirgon
Judy Molberg
Rebecca Nash
David Nelson
Donna Nelson
Nancy Neupert
Werner Neupert
Marge Oleson
Amanda Osborne
Deirdre Parker

Leslie Petrash
Bill Powell
Jim & Rosemary Probst
Millie Russell
Joy Seacat
Mary Shaver
Hanna Sparks
Nancy Styler
Trey Styler
Michael Thomas
Andria Thomas
Micaela Thomas
Terry Tomsick
Carol Tuttle
Zak Volleberg
Pat Weis-Taylor
Theresa Westhoven
Sandy Wilson
Larry Zuppen

Our apologies if we missed anyone - please let us know.

Coming in April . . .

The April program will be a comprehensive presentation of the vast assortment of lilies, lotus and aquatic plants (emergent, submerged and floating) to grow in your pond. Learn which plants will grow in the shade, which ones will do well in containers and which ones need lots of room to grow.



Don't forget . . .

CWGS has a website with pond information, meeting dates and membership information. Share it with a friend!

<http://www.colowatergardensociety.org>



Don't miss an opportunity to possibly determine the name of plant(s) that lost a tag, or to see what plant(s) you might want to add to your collection.

April 14, 2 p.m. - Mark your calendar!
Bring a friend or neighbor!

2002 Membership Renewal

(continued from front page)

• We hope to continue progress on increasing the number of water lily specimens in the Helen Fowler Library at Denver Botanic Garden during the summer.

Also please let us know what educational programs you would like us to provide. Our September meeting will be a combination of educational programs and demonstrations. Your input will help us to determine the many offerings.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Secretary Needed

At the close of last year our Secretary Carol Tuttle resigned, due to personal reasons. We thank her for her time and effort for the year she served. We desperately need someone to replace her to take notes and record minutes of meetings. The job requires attendance at Board meetings, which usually precede our general meetings and when needed, assist in collecting memberships at events and meetings. IF you would like to volunteer please contact Cyndie Thomas at (303) 755-1885 or by e-mail at splash@atbi.com. No experience necessary.

NEEDED -Ponds for the tour and volunteers

We are seeking members who want to volunteer to have their pond on the 2002 CWGS Pond Tour, or who want to volunteer a non-member's pond for the tour. The tour will be held July 14. We are looking for ponds in the central or southern part of Denver proper. Please contact Craig Russell at 303-443-7877 or by e-mail at chrussell@msn.com.

Craig also is seeking volunteers to assist him in organizing the pond tour. He would like a committee of members to help select the ponds and help with finding a picnic location, signage, advertising and food. Please contact him at the number or e-mail address above.

History of Water Gardening Spa

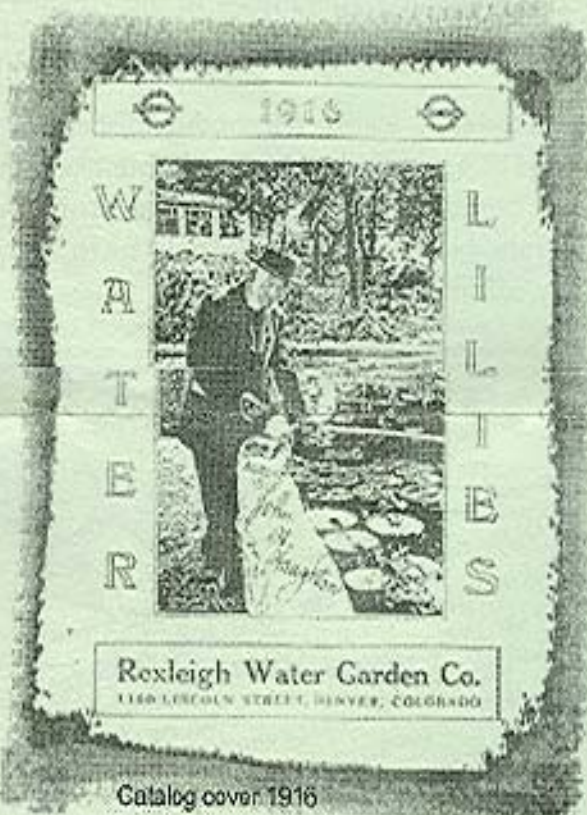
Viewing through the window to the past, the beauty of water gardening appeared in Colorado about the turn of the last century. Written history, in word and pictures, tells us that during the first three decades of the 1900's, three major public water garden displays were created in the Metro area.

Around 1900 the Reverend J.H. Houghton, pastor of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Denver, purchased a country home in Englewood named Rexleigh. For the next 15 years, using "marriage fees," he improved the home, built ponds and brought water lilies to Colorado. He solved a primary question of those from the Eastern

horsecar. Parishioners, and especially the children, were extended an invitation often to visit during warm months. Houghton desired to share the educational value of botany and zoology with children. Not only did they see the lilies in labeled pots, but he also had an unusual collection of turtles for the children to enjoy.

Rev. Houghton's desire to share his lily ponds was like "opening the gold mine of pleasure (from lily ponds) for Coloradoans," and resulted in the opening of the Rexleigh Water Garden Company in 1916. In a four-page leaflet, his first offerings included a listing of 57 varieties to view and 8 available for purchase. A florist's market at Rexleigh's offered cut flowers from the grounds, including water lilies.

In 1917, after 25 years of service, he left his position as rector of St. Marks Episcopal Church to head a new Mission Church of St. George in Englewood. Rexleigh's Water Garden Company offerings grew that year to 49 hardy lily plants, 19 tropical lily plants, and a dozen more available for viewing. A road was



Catalog cover 1916

United States - "Could pond lilies be grown in the highest West?" He found the answer to be "yes," and in 1903 it was reported in society pages that Rexleigh was the garden spot of Denver. It was built on a sloping hillside. At the top was the home, with green lawn down to meet the City Ditch, which formed an "ox bow" on the grounds. The ditch provided water to the multiple pools Houghton built for the lilies. Delightful gardens of cutting flowers were spread throughout Rexleigh. Part of the delight in visiting Rexleigh was getting there. Visitors would have a unique ride on the Cherrelyn

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City Park Lily



City Park Lily Lake 1920

The Water Garden

ns Over 100 Years in Colorado

placed for "drive through" learning in the lily pool area. Visitors were invited to view the lilies any time June 1 through August 15. Lilies available for purchase were priced at \$.25 to \$25. By Houghton's own admission, "no one would want to invest such sums until they see the flowers."



Lake 1921



The Water Garden

Rev. Houghton died at the age of 70, in 1918, at Rexleigh.

Denver City Park supervisor, Mr. J. L. Russell, visited Rexleigh in 1916 and left with an armload of lilies for a barren, mosquito-infested City Park Lake. It was Russell's visit that spurred Houghton to start the commercial venture. In 1917, an additional \$500 worth

of lilies were purchased from Rexleigh's to increase the number of blooms in the lily pond. Tropical lily varieties were included in the purchase. It was said to be the largest collection West of the Mississippi. In 1919 the pond, located near the 17th Avenue entrance, was overtaken by motor oil washed from the streets during a storm, killing all the lilies. A new lily pond was built in 1925, east and north up the rise from the large lake. Within a year, growth of the lilies filled in to equal the beauty of the original pond. Thousands of blossoms covered the surface daily. This pond survived until 1970,

when minimal maintenance was available for their care. It became a shaded, quiet pond with a boundary of trees and shrubs. Cement foundations in the pond, for placement of the potted lilies, are still visible in the shallow water.



Louis Liebhardt, a well-known Denver real estate and investment businessman, purchased 36.5 acres of prairie land near the foothills in 1899. His intent, as a lifelong



Rose Acres 1930's

bachelor, was to have a place where nieces and nephews could visit and enjoy the outdoors. A frame house was the only improvement on the acreage. His first addition to the property was hundreds of trees. This was only the start of a creation which would become a nationally-known garden called Rose Acres. In 1928 he built a large four-story brick home on the property. His sisters, Dr. Laura Liebhardt and Miss. Minnie Liebhardt, both spinsters, lived with him on the property and assisted with the garden development. The three traveled the world to find unusual plants for their passion for beautiful

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History of Water Gardening Spans Over 100 Years in Colorado

Continued from page 5

gardens. Lotus from Egypt and lilies from Africa, were among their collection. Water was piped into the property from the mountains to a reservoir that was the first of 14 lakes and ponds developed on the property. A rose garden with 40,000 rose bushes filled the entrance area to the

150,000 to 300,000 goldfish were in several of the ponds. Baskets with shredded dry bread were placed along the pathways near the ponds for feeding the fish. The sisters prepared 50 loaves daily for feeding. To protect the rare lotus and water lilies, hot water was piped from the boiler room in the basement of the mansion through the ponds to stabilize water temperatures. Plants were brought indoors in September of each year.



Rose Acres 1930's

One day each week the public had the opportunity to tour the gardens. By invitation only, hundreds of guests were brought to the gardens annually on Wednesdays or Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., July through mid-September. August was suggested as the best month to view the gardens. The invitations stipulated "no kodaks please." A printed booklet with photos of the gardens accompanied each invitation.

At the age of 75, Louis Liebhardt died of a sudden heart attack in 1938. Rose Acres flourished until its sale in 1951. It was buried with a housing development in 1953.



This short history and photos were obtained from the various sources available at the Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Genealogy Department. Researched by Lois Mayerchak, John Mirgon, and Cyndie Thomas, Colorado Water Garden Society.

mansion. The water gardens were contiguous, winding throughout the grounds. Revolving cast iron lotus leaf seats were situated along the flagstone pathways. Several drinking fountains scattered on the property were designed to blend with the garden and were designed to look like lotus leaves with a poised bird spouting water from its beak. In a deliberate attempt to attract and protect birds drawn to the natural habitat, Liebhardt hand-carved and painted birdhouses made of gourds in ornate designs to look like frogs and fish. An estimated 500 of these gourd houses were hung in the trees and on the fences.

The Liebhardts created an Oriental theme throughout their garden, including teahouses, Japanese bridges and ornate gold carvings purchased from the St. Louis World's Fair Chinese exhibit. A Shinto Temple of Ho Shan, god of prosperity and happiness, adorned one garden. Ponds were planted with lotus and lilies. It was estimated that 600,000 lotus blossoms bloomed annually. An estimated

CWGS Water Gardening and Pond Expo

Mark your calendars! CWGS will be hosting the first Water Gardening and Pond Expo on September 8, 2002, 12noon - 5 p.m. in Mitchell Hall at the Denver Botanic Gardens.

Planning is in progress for the event and your input is desired. Currently pond design and construction individuals and companies will be invited to display their creations; pond supply vendors will be invited to share their goods; booths to share information on various facets of water gardening will be available.

A special "Pond Walk" through the Denver Botanic Gardens' ponds will be directed by Bruce McLane of Florida Aquatic Nurseries. A program (subject to be determined) will be given by Richard Koogle of Lilypons, sponsored by Aquarium Pharmaceuticals.

If you know of anyone who would like to participate, or if you are willing to volunteer to assist, contact Bo Lindsey at (303) 753-6620 or Nancy Styler at (303)850-7150.

FEATURED MEMBER'S PONDS

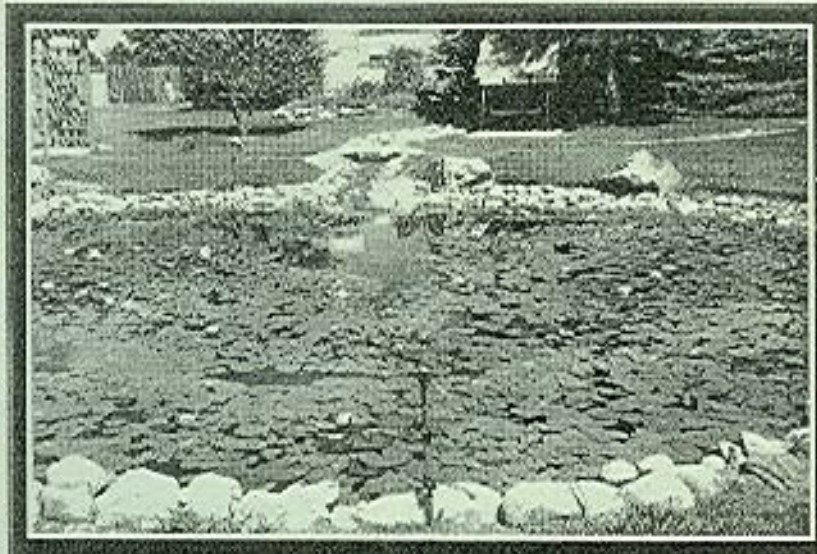
IRMAL & ALICE MILLER FRANKTOWN

We made our first pond in 1981. I bought three water lilies from Gurney's Seed Catalog. In 1983 I learned of the Colorado Water Garden Society.

In 1985 we redid our pond and stream with hypalon, making it 18 inches deep. All the rocks except the big ones are from our lot, using the shallow ledge as a rock barrier to keep the deer out. The water wheel is handmade.

Cattails, pickerel rush and 55-60 pots of water lilies, comet goldfish and snails inhabit the pond. Visitors to our pond are garter snakes, frogs, salamanders, Blue Heron, Kingfisher, Violet Green Swallows, and a variety of dragonflies; one unusual florescent white variety and Bluets.

-Alice Miller



MO BELISLE - DENVER



The pond is 600 gallons with a 12" plant ledge and an 18" plant ledge. It is approximately six foot by seven foot and 32" deep in the center. The waterfall is 18" high. It is a "homemade" pond, built three years ago.

Residents include: four Koi, four goldfish, two frogs, and two snails

- Mo Belisle

If you would like to have your pond featured, please send photos and a short description to: Ponds, c/o 1023 S. Kittredge Way, Aurora, CO 80017. You may also submit jpeg formatted digital photos to: splaash@attbi.com Include your description in the e-mail. Photos will also be featured (in color) on the web site. Sorry, we cannot return photos.