



# The Water Garden

Journal of the Colorado Water Garden Society

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## Spring 2025 Newsletter

### 1st Quarter 2025 President's Letter

By: Vicki Aber

It is so exciting that the gardening season is starting. The lilies are starting to reach for the surface. Fish are thinking they should be fed. Marsh marigolds are starting to bloom.

The Club is also gearing up for the coming season. We have many events planned. Get Wet is only the beginning. Club members will assist with the Botanic Gardens' Spring Plant Sale. The Plant Swap will be May 19th at Hudson Gardens. Our Plant Sale is June 7th, also at Hudson Gardens. We are already discussing and planning on which plants to order.

After a year off, we have a Pond Tour planned for this year - yeah! We are planning for the northwest metro area (Lakewood, Golden, Wheat Ridge, Arvada, & NW Denver). If you are in that area, please reach out to Dennis Weatherman at [dweatherman@msn.com](mailto:dweatherman@msn.com) or myself at [docvicki@msn.com](mailto:docvicki@msn.com).

August 10th will be the Water Blossom Celebration at Denver Botanic Gardens with tours, information and free plants. On September 15th our Photo Contest winners will be announced, so get your camera clicking and enter your great pictures. Don't forget the Holiday Party December 8th. Makes me tired and excited thinking of all of it.

Get your gardens going and come to our various events and share, learn, and catch up with old friends and new. Watch for more information in newsletters and on the website.

### Get Wet 2025: Marginal Plants – What are They and How to Use Them to Enhance the Beauty of Your Pond?

By: Dorothy Martinez, Tamara Kilbane, & Vicki Aber



*Iris ensata* (photo courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden)



Taro 'Mojito' (Photo courtesy of Plant Delights Nursery)



It's that time of year again! The weather is warming up and very soon, our thoughts will turn to gardening. With the colder temperatures mostly behind us, spring pond chores are approaching fast. What better time to start pondering which plant additions would help enhance your water feature?

When we think of aquatic plants, probably the first one to come to mind is waterlilies. They add color and texture to the surface of our ponds and also help provide shelter and shade for our fish. What about the edges of our ponds? This is where marginal plants play a very important role. As the name suggests, marginal plants live on the margins of ponds and water features. They serve as a visual layer to soften the edges of water features as well as help with water filtration and quality.

We will be discussing all types of marginal plants at our 2025 Get Wet event. As the title of this article says what are marginal plants and how do we use them to enhance the beauty of our ponds?

For answers, please join us on Monday, April 21st in Gates Hall within the Boettcher Memorial Center at the Denver Botanic Gardens. The meeting will start at 7:00 pm, doors open at 6:30 pm. You can park in the parking garage and enter the gardens through the Visitor Center and proceed to the Boettcher Memorial Center and Gates Hall located past the rest rooms.

If you are looking at ways to enhance your pond or water feature this summer, this is the perfect talk for you. Marginal plants are the perfect way to add an element of diversity, color, and zing to the edges of your pond.

There will be three speakers: Tamara Kilbane, Vicki Aber, and Dorothy Martinez.

Tamara will be speaking on aquatic Iris and will go over the various species and examples of cultivars within those including Japanese Iris (*Iris ensata*), Rabbit Ear Iris (*Iris laevigata*), Iris pseudata (*pseudacorus x ensata* crosses), Louisiana Iris, and Northern and Southern Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor* and *I. virginica*). She will also go over care tips for each.

Vicki's talk is how marginal plants add interest to your water feature, but how they are not all created equal. Some plants are very well behaved; they stay in the area they were planted in, fill in nicely, but don't start invading territories they weren't invited into. She will discuss plants that we should welcome into our ponds, ones that we can welcome but have to keep an eye on for misbehavior, and ones that should never be invited in.

Dorothy will cover tropical marginal plants. Tropical plants offer such a wonderful way to add color, texture, and dimension to the areas surrounding the edges of your pond or water feature. They add a lush and softening effect, are easy to grow, and mature quickly. Dorothy will emphasize cannas, papyrus, and taros.

Get Wet is our first event of the year and is a great way to kick off the season! Please join us for this sure to be engaging event about marginal plants.

For more information, please contact Dorothy at [dam@johnfunk.com](mailto:dam@johnfunk.com) or (303) 279-3137.



Sagittaria 'Crushed Ice' (photo courtesy of Florida Aquatic Nurseries)

### New Newsletter Format

**By: Dorothy Martinez**

The Colorado Water Garden Society has been talking about how to simplify the quasi-monthly Newsletter for several year's now. As you probably know, producing the Newsletter takes quite a bit of effort and time to produce.

We feel this is a very important part of the group's activities as it is our main mechanism for getting the word out about our various meetings and events throughout the year. It also is a great tool for education and we certainly do not want to discontinue this vital service.

To simplify things, we have decided to offer the Newsletter quarterly versus 8 times per year. We will now have a Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter edition. The Newsletter will still contain all the information you have come to expect, just fewer editions.

If you would like to see a specific topic covered, please let me know. We have access to some great information and are here to help cover topics that interest you.

For questions or to add your input, you can contact Dorothy at [dam@johnfunk.com](mailto:dam@johnfunk.com) or (303) 279 3137.

### Time To Shop at the Denver Botanic Gardens' 2025 Spring Plant Sale



Denver Botanic Gardens' Spring Plant Sale (Photo courtesy of Denver Botanic Gardens)

**By: Brenda Parsons-Hier**

A very special event is happening again this year at the Denver Botanic Gardens. The Spring Plant Sale will be Friday May 9th and Saturday May 10th. As always it will offer an amazing selection of plants to purchase.

You are sure to find something you like in one or more of the following sections: Plant Select, Rock Garden, Roses, Annuals, Perennials, Herbs, Grown at the Gardens, Indoor Plants, Aquatics (my favorite), and more. The Gardens usually publishes a list of plants that will be offered, so you can plan ahead. Check back on their website frequently for updates. Note, some plants may not be offered due to supplier availability.

CWGS members like to support the Sale by volunteering in the Aquatics booth. There are 3 shifts both days. Before or after you work you can shop (also, my favorite). The Gardens give us snacks and lunch to support us.

Entry to the sale requires a timed reservation ticket that is free and available on their website: <https://www.botanicgardens.org/spring-events-programs-information>. Start looking in early April for tickets, as they "sell out" fast. If you volunteer, that is your pass to get in.

Please contact me, if you are interested in volunteering in the Aquatics booth. One shift is full already, but lots of space is still left. We help shoppers understand the plant's needs, meet nice people, and laugh a lot. Join us!

For more information, contact Brenda at [moose.4bph@q.com](mailto:moose.4bph@q.com) or (303) 278-2106.

### Tropical Plant Division Workshop

**By: Dorothy Martinez**

Have you ever wondered how to divide and repot certain plants when you are preparing your pond for the season?

If you said yes, we have the perfect opportunity for you! We will be hosting a tropical plant division workshop on Saturday, May 17th from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm near the greenhouse at Hudson Gardens.

We will be diving and repotting red stemmed thalia, aquatic ginger, giant papyrus, dwarf giant papyrus, dwarf papyrus, umbrella palm, dwarf umbrella palm, hardy banana, and various taro plants.

The greenhouse is located south of the Vegetable and Herb Gardens. Park in the main parking lot, enter Hudson Gardens either through the Visitor Center/Gift Shop or through the entrance to the south of the Visitor Center/Gift Shop. Be prepared to walk some distance, as the greenhouse's location is towards the furthest corner (southwest) of the property from the Visitor Center/Gift Shop.

For a map of Hudson Gardens, click here:

<https://www.hudsongardens.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/hg-map-2024-HCALogo.pdf>

For more information, please contact Dorothy Martinez at (303) 279-3137 or [dam@johnfunk.com](mailto:dam@johnfunk.com).

### CWGS 2025 Plant Swap



2024 CWGS Plant Swap at Hudson Gardens (photo courtesy of Dorothy Martinez)

**By: Dorothy Martinez**

Get ready for our Annual Plant Swap. We will be holding the Plant Swap on Monday, May 19th from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. The Plant Swap will be at Hudson Gardens again this year at the same location it was last year – The Overlook pavilion.

To access The Overlook, please enter the gardens via the main entrance on Sante Fe, turn left (South) and proceed on Vinewood until you reach the dirt parking lot located adjacent to The Overlook. Park here and follow the signs to The Overlook. If you park in the Main Lot near the Gift Shop, you will have a longer walk.

For a map of Hudson Gardens click here:

<https://www.hudsongardens.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/hg-map-2024-HCALogo.pdf>

We will start the Swap with a potluck from 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Please bring a dish of your choice, be it an appetizer, salad, side dish, main dish, or dessert. The Club will provide drinks.

We will proceed with the Swap at 7:00 pm. Each person who brought a plant or plants will stand by those plants and talk about their plants including the plant's growth habit, hardiness, color, etc. This will help the new owner of the plant to be successful. After everyone has had a chance to talk about their plants, the swapping begins. After everyone who brought a plant has had a chance to get the plants they want, we open it up for people that didn't bring anything and people that would like more items than the number they brought. When you have

chosen all of the plants/items you want, remember to place them away from the area of the Swap so they don't get selected again by someone else!

The Swap is not just limited to aquatic plants; you can bring terrestrial plants, house plants, decorative pots, equipment, etc. Be sure to bring something to put all of your newly adopted plants in to take home.

Hopefully, at the end of the Swap, everyone goes home happy. We hope to see you there!

If you have any questions, please contact Dorothy at [dam@johnfunk.com](mailto:dam@johnfunk.com) or (303) 279-3137.

## 2025 IWGS Symposium



New York Botanical Garden Conservatory (photo courtesy of New York Botanical Garden)



Lily Tanks at Waterford Gardens (photo courtesy of Waterford Gardens)



Pergola at Wave Hill Gardens (Photo courtesy of Wave Hill Gardens)

**By: Dorothy Martinez**

Registration has opened for this year's International Waterlily and Water Garden Society's 2025 Symposium to be held in New York from Tuesday, August 12th through Saturday, August 16th (including pre and post Symposium dates).

To register, go to:

<https://iwgs.org/2025-symposium-registration-form/>

To reserve at the host hotel, go to:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/lgaywhx-iwg-edoaf8-ae63-4455-aa9d-7f3132c0a2b/>

The itinerary includes:

**Tuesday, August 12th – Pre-Symposium Day Visit to Manhattan and Central Park**

Visit downtown Manhattan, Little Island's Tulip Garden, The Met, and other places of interest. Tour one of New York City's newest and most innovative green spaces with spectacular views of the New York City Waterfront and skyline.

Following Little Island, experience the uniqueness and beauty of the High Line on a guided tour of its Gardens. The High Line was built on top of a discontinued elevated train railway that has been re-imagined and re-purposed as a public green space.

The tour continues with a walk through the beautiful Central Park Conservancy Garden, then you will enjoy a special guided tour of the collections and exhibitions of rare and beautiful objects at the world-renowned Metropolitan Museum of Art. Nearby attractions include a short walk through the Shakespeare Garden in Central Park.

**Wednesday, August 13 – Tour Day**

Visit two of New York City's premier botanic gardens, Brooklyn Botanic Garden and the New York Botanical Garden. Both include plenty of interest for water gardeners, with both outdoor water gardens and indoor tropical ponds.

Brooklyn Botanic Garden is an urban botanic garden. Situated on 52 acres in the heart of Brooklyn and open year-round, the Garden is home to over 10,000 kinds of plants and more than 30 specialty gardens. Staff at Brooklyn have kindly agreed to give us introductory tours and answer questions. A box lunch will be provided.

New York Botanical Garden's 250 acres are home to renowned exhibitions, immersive botanical experiences, art and music, and events. They are stewards of globally significant research collections, from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library collection to the plant and fungal specimens in the William and Lynda Steere Herbarium, the largest such collection in the Western Hemisphere.

**Thursday, August 14 – Tour Day**

Visit Aquascapes Unlimited, a wholesale plant nursery, Fitz's Fish Ponds, and Waterford Gardens.

Aquascapes Unlimited Inc. is a wholesale aquatic nursery located on 20 acres in Bucks County, Pennsylvania that produces native wetland and ornamental aquatic species, as well as carnivorous and custom hybrid pitcher plants. It has a 20-acre site which is a certified National Wildlife Fund habitat containing vernal pools, a restored woodlot, 10 acres of wet woodlands, and open meadows. Lunch is provided.

Next is Fitz's Fish Ponds where we will visit their state-of-the-art greenhouses which are dedicated to housing their imported Japanese Koi and aquatic plants. Their koi at the farm are available for purchase for both wholesale and retail customers.

Next stop is Waterford Gardens (now FFP Saddle River), which was recently purchased by Fitz's Fish Ponds who are preserving and re-vitalizing this location. Waterford Gardens was originally established as the first commercial waterlily farm in the United States by William Tricker in 1895. Tricker's groundbreaking contributions included hybridizing waterlilies, introducing exotic varieties, and publishing some of the earliest water gardening catalogs, such as [The Standard Guide to Water Gardening](#).

**Friday, August 15 – Education Day at Wave Hill Gardens**

Go to Wave Hill Gardens for a full day of talks during this education day. Lunch, the evening reception, and dinner will be provided. The full conference day schedule will be added here as details become finalized

**Saturday, August 16th - Post-Symposium Day at Longwood Gardens**

Visit Longwood Gardens located in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. After more than three years in the making, "Longwood Reimagined" opened on November 22, 2024. Just imagine amazing new gardens, new glasshouses, new landscapes, and new dining all ready to be discovered. Explore brand new spaces years in the making — including the sprawling new West Conservatory and its islands of plants, the beloved Cascade Garden in a new custom glasshouse, and imaginative new outdoor landscapes.

*Note from Dorothy: I have been to numerous IWGS Symposiums and have thoroughly enjoyed all of them. The tour days include visits to very interesting gardens and nurseries. The Education Days are informative. Some topics may interest you more than others, but I have always gone to as many as I can and have come away being more engaged about water gardening than before.*

*If you have not attended an IWGS Symposium before, I would highly recommend it!*