

# HOTWGPS Newsletter

Volume 9 Issue 10

November 2017

## November 14, 2017 Meeting

Our November Meeting will be the HOTWGPS Christmas party. It will be held at the Lake Waco Wetlands, 1752 Eichelberger Crossing, China Spring at 6:30 PM. The meat will be catered by DeMaria's Barbeque. Members should bring the "fixins" to go with the meat. We must have an RSVP of the number of folks attending so we can order the correct amount of meat. Please email the number in your party not later than 5 PM Sunday November 12 to Harv at [uffdaharv@hotmail.com](mailto:uffdaharv@hotmail.com).

There will be "Chinese" gift exchange (some clubs call it a "Bad Santa" gift exchange) with a \$20.00 limit. You do not have to bring a gift but then you won't get to participate in the fun either. It is fun to watch but more fun to participate!



## Pond Vac

As a reminder, this is a "Members Only" benefit. You can rent this super-duper pond cleaning machine very reasonably! John Enders is the "official pond Vac keeper". Call him 254-848-9596 or send him an email at [jenders@aol.com](mailto:jenders@aol.com) to schedule your time with the machine. One note of caution when using the pond Vac, watch how much water you are removing from your pond!! It works so well sucking up the yuk that one

can easily forget how much water is also being removed! That is the voice of experience talking!!



This from the Pond Guy Blog

**My mom wants a water feature but needs something easy to maintain. Any suggestions?**



Sounds like mom has been bitten by the water gardening bug! Thanks to all the options available to budding pond hobbyists, she doesn't need to install a maintenance-heavy feature. She can find a simple-to-use one that's ideal for a small yard, patio or tabletop. It's easy to help her choose the

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perfect water feature. Simply ask her these questions:

## **Does She Want to Keep Fish?**

If so, she'll need a water feature that has a pond to house fish as well as a filtration system to keep their water clean – and the AllClear™ Ecosystem Pond Kits are designed for hobbyists who want just that. They come in several sizes, but the 6-foot-by-11-foot kit creates a pond that's about 700 gallons, which is large enough for a few fish and a small waterfall. It includes fish-safe pond liner and underlayment, a pressurized filter, a waterfall filter, pump, tubing, waterfall foam, installation hardware and 12 packets of Nature's Defense. All she'll need is a little help digging the hole in her yard!

## **Does She Want a Waterfall but No Fish?**

If a waterfall is her main wish, she won't need to get dirty digging a pond. She can try something self-contained, like the Atlantic™ Colorfalls Basin Kit and Colorfalls Lighted Waterfall Weir. Basin Kits come in three sizes – 12 inches, 24 inches and 36 inches – and includes a Colorfalls Basin reservoir, a TidalWave 2 pump, splash mat, auto fill valve and installation kit. She can add some aquatic plants and choose a waterfall color for nighttime viewing. And talk about low maintenance: There's no filtration system to worry about. Easy peasy!

## **Does She Just Want the Sound of Bubbling Water?**

If she's simply after the soothing sound of bubbling water, suggest something more decorative, like the Atlantic™ Color Changing Vase Fountain and Basin Kit. Available individually in several sizes or as a set, the polyethylene vases in this water feature come alive with color and light as water bubbles from the top. The kit includes a color-changing vase fountain, fountain basin, a plumbing kit, auto fill valve, pump and remote control to turn on the light display. This simple-to-operate feature becomes quite a show-stopper at night! These easy-maintenance water features will transform your mom's yard or patio into a relaxing oasis that she'll love. But be warned: Once the water gardening bug bites, she'll be hooked – and asking for a larger pond in no time!



From the Microbe-Lift Pond & Aquarium Newsletter,  
October 2017

## **Did You Know-?**

Any parasites in your pond, on your fish, before winter (*Argulus*, etc) can overwinter and rise again in spring when fish are at their weakest.

Koi are continually changing color throughout their lives, unless they are the solid yellow or white color fish (*Ogon*).

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It is easier to find a new home for koi when small rather than wait until they outgrow your pond. Something to consider.



This from the Pond Guy Blog 10/14/17

## How do I overwinter my tropical lilies?



Vivid and fragrant, tropical water lilies are the floating jewels of a pond. If you live in Hardiness Zone 9 or lower, (that is us) you'll need to take extra special care of these warm-weather-loving beauties over the cold season. To overwinter tropical water lilies, you have two choices: send them into dormancy or keep them growing.

### Going Dormant for Winter

If you decide to send your water lilies into dormancy for the winter, stop fertilizing them in the fall to slow their growth and help them prepare their tubers for winter. After the first frost, pull out your Aqua Gloves™ and follow these step-by-step instructions:

First, remove the lily and planting basket from the pond. Using your hands, dig around in the soil just below the plant's crown to feel for the tubers. They normally range in size from an acorn to golf ball, but they can be smaller or larger.

Take out the tubers and rinse each one very well with a strong stream of water. Use your pond scissors to trim off remnants of roots or stems. If small tubers are growing on a larger tuber, remove them and store them—they could turn into new lilies plants next year!

Store the tubers in a plastic bag or glass jar that's filled with damp (not wet!) peat moss, sphagnum moss or sand. Consider dusting them with a fungicide before sealing them up. Keep the container in a room that stays warmer than 50° F.

Once a month through the winter, check on your tubers to be sure they're still damp. Spritz them with water if they get dry.

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When water temperatures climb back to 60° F in the spring, replant the tubers in a planting basket filled with fresh, fertile soil. Position them just below the surface with the pointy side up and round side down.

## Keep Them Growing

If you decide to keep your water lilies growing over the winter, set up a space in your home for a grow light and an aquarium or lined indoor pond. After the first frost, take the lilies and their planting baskets inside and follow these tips:

First, trim off the largest leaves and any dead, dry or damaged leaves with your pond scissors.

Place the planting baskets and plants inside in an aquarium or lined pond filled with water.

Keep the water temperature above 60° F, and use a grow light to keep the lilies growing slowly over the winter.

Once the weather outside warms and your pond's water temperature climbs back to 60° F, transplant your lilies or add some fertilizer to their existing soil and submerge them.

Overwintering tropical water lilies isn't hard, but it does require some space and planning. Good luck!



The following 2 articles are from The Pond Guy Blog 10-23-17

## Are other fish like my plecostomus as hardy over the winter as my koi?



We talk about how koi and certain types of goldfish, like Sarassa and Shubunkins, can overwinter in your pond or water garden even when water temperatures dip to near-freezing levels.

But what about other common pond fishes? Well, it depends on your USDA hardiness zone, which divides the country into zones based on how cold the temperatures get. Just as with plants, some fish species can be "hardy" in some climates and not in others.

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An Oranda, for instance, might do just fine overwintering in a pond in Orlando, Fla., but up in Fargo, N.D., that same fish would turn into a popsicle—even with an aeration system and deicer. When the temperatures begin to fall in colder zones, here's what you do:

1. Keep a close eye on your pond's water temperature using a thermometer, like the Floating Pond Thermometer. When the mercury hits 68 degrees or so, it's time to bring those less hardy fishes—including Plecostomus, Oranda, Telescope goldfish and Black Moors—inside.
2. Carefully scoop those snowbird fishes out of the pond with a net, like The Pond Guy® Collapsible Fish Net, and place them in a bucket pre-filled with some of your pond's water.
3. Re-home the fishes in a properly sized indoor fish tank or aquarium outfitted with the right mechanical and biological filtration system for the job. Be sure to condition the water and pre-treat it with some beneficial bacteria to kick start the system's biological filtration, too. As soon as sun thaws your pond water—or at least heats it back up to room temperature—it's safe to return those fishes to their "summer" home.



ASKED BY: Austin of Breesport, NY

## **I have a lot of leaves blowing into my pond. Will the bacteria still work this time of year?**

There's really no getting around leaves. Every fall, those deciduous trees drop their colorful foliage and leave behind a headache for those who have to clean them up.

Natural bacteria will do a great job breaking down the fallen leaves in your pond or lake – but only when water temperatures are above 50° F. Take your pond's temperature with a pond thermometer; as long as your water is at or above that 50° F mark, keep using MuckAway™ and PondClear™. The microorganisms in those products will continue to work hard to break down

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organic debris. (editor note: Microbe-Lift Fall & Winter works well too)

Going into winter as temperatures dip below that number, however, the bacteria go on vacation. But there are some things you can do to keep your pond healthy as the cooler weather approaches. Here's what we recommend.

**Rake up the Leaves:** As powerful as natural bacteria are, they will still take a long time to break down fresh leaves that blow into your pond. Help those microorganisms out by raking up and disposing of as many leaves as possible.

**Rake out the Leaves:** If they do float into your pond, use a Pond & Beach Rake or Weed Raker to skim and rake those leaves out of your pond. If an abundance of leaves remains in the pond as ice begins to form, this could lead to poor water quality. As the leaves continue to break down, they will release toxic gases that will edge out available oxygen – and if there is ice covering your pond, that's bad news for your fish.

**Aerate All Winter:** Unless you plan to use your pond or lake as an ice rink this winter, keep your aeration system running. This will help keep a hole in the ice, circulate the water and keep your oxygen levels higher.

**Maintain Your Landscape:** In addition to raking up leaves around your pond, keep the foliage around your pond maintained. Prevent that organic debris from getting into the water and turning into algae and pond weed fertilizer.

Bottom line: Yes, bacteria will still work while temperatures are above 50° F, but help them out by removing as much leaf litter and organic debris as possible. There's no way to fully prevent leaves from falling into your pond – but the fewer that do, the better.

(Editor Note: covering the pond with netting will do a lot to keep the leaves and predators out.)

## Words of Wisdom

From Country magazine Oct-Nov 2017

If you can't be a lifter, don't be a leaner.

A dog who attends a flea market may steal the show.

The shortest way to wear out your welcome is to wear a long face.

If you listen to the never do's, it's never done.

It is easier to preach 10 sermons than it is to live one.

When tempted to fight fire with fire, remember the fire department uses water!

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The one time a windshield works properly is when it is holding a parking ticket.



## The Water Garden's Tip of the Week

The bacteria in a biological filter converts ammonia to nitrites and nitrites to nitrates. In a water garden with plants the nitrates are used by the plants. In a koi pond, or other pond with few or no plants, the nitrates just continue to build up in the water. Nitrate is far less toxic than ammonia or nitrites, but if allowed to build up for too long it will present problems. At least every 3 to 5 weeks a partial (about 10 to 20%) water change is recommended to reduce nitrate levels in fish ponds.



## The Water Garden's Tip of the Week

If you have an Aqua Ultraviolet UV unit installed on your pond and you plan to run the pump all winter, you can protect the glass parts by removing them until spring and using a [Winterizing Cap](#).



## On the Lighter Side



While walking along a trail, my 7 year old grandson, Ryan, commented, "There's a fork in the road back there." "Really?" I asked, imagining someone's missing silverware. But then a thought came to me. "Oh, was it a plastic one?" Laughing hysterically, Ryan said, "No Grandma, it's where the road splits in two!"

Pauline Kettleborough, Churubusco, Indiana



What breed of dog tells off—color jokes????  
A Smutt!



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