

HOTWGPS Newsletter

Volume 11 Issue 1

January 2019

Meeting

Our meeting this month will be January 15 at 6:30 PM. We will meet at Urban Reach Downtown and learn about Aquaponics with Dan from Mission Waco.



The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it. - Albert Einstein



Membership Dues

As a reminder, our 2019 membership dues are due January 1, 2019. In accordance with our Bylaws, membership becomes delinquent if dues are not paid by the last day of February. You can either bring your dues to the meeting or mail them to HOTWGPS, P.O. Box 852, Lorena, TX 76655.

Membership levels are:

- a. Individual -- \$18 per year
- b. Family -- \$24 per year
- c. Associate NON - Voting membership -- \$12 per year.
- d. Corporate/business -- \$100 per year.



This from Webbs Water Gardens



In the wide world of waterfalls, there are many approaches to construction. However, creating the most natural looking waterfall possible is always the bottom line. Below you'll find a list of tips that should help make the design and construction go a little smoother. Hopefully, saving you time and frustration.



Visibility:

Make sure the waterfall is going to be visible from the areas used most often – family room, deck, patio window, etc. Always best when you can enjoy it not only from outside but inside your home. In most water features the waterfall will be the focal point.

Blend:

If the area of install is low lying, maintain that feel by building a slight berm around

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the waterfall area. A few small drops with large stones to frame. Don't build a volcano style waterfall in a flat setting. You want the waterfall to blend flawlessly with your landscape.



Moving Stone & Gravel:

Moving heavy stone is no doubt everyone's least favorite part of building a waterfall. For those larger more awkward stones you just can't hold, try cutting a piece of underlayment and using it like a sling. You would be surprised with how much weight it can handle. For that smaller stone and gravel, use a 5 gallon bucket with handle.



Expanding Polyurethane Foam:

When placing your stone, keep in mind you're creating areas for water to flow. During placement you'll notice gaps forming around, under and behind the stones. Once your pump is turned on, water will flow into these gaps instead of flowing down and over the stones. To avoid this, these gaps should be filled with an expanding polyurethane foam. The foam will fill large or small gaps as it expands roughly three times in size. Typically, grey in color so that it will blend with most rock colors. Always wear gloves and protective eyewear when using expanding foam.



Use Gravel to Conceal Expanding Foam:

To better hide the foam and before it has a chance to cure, cover it with small gravel or crushed stone. The gravel will stick directly to the tacky foam as it hardens. Make sure foam is given adequate time to cure before pumps are turned on.

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Frame with Large Stones: Your waterfall will always look more natural when using the biggest stones to frame bends and drop locations - utilize stones with a flat surface between these frame rocks. The waterflow will hit the larger stones finding its way through the space between. Use small rocks and gravel to fill in gaps. Be inspired and take your time when laying out your stones.



Landscaping:

Use low lying plants along the edges and taller plants to backdrop, the more the better. They will help soften all the hard edges of the stone – creating a more natural overall feel as if the waterfall has always been there. Make sure plantings blend smoothly with

the rest of your property and mulch to finalize the install.

Do Your Homework:

Let Mother Nature be your muse. Study the construction of streams and waterfalls found in nature. Research on-line or at your local library for pictures and ideas. What better place to draw inspiration than from what's found right in Mother Nature.



Christmas cacti

By Neil Sperry

If you visit the tropical jungles of South America, and if you look up high above your head, you're likely to see Christmas cacti in riotous bloom. It's their summertime, and they're celebrating by flowering.



But in a jungle? And up in trees? Cacti? Really?

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While most members of the cactus family are terrestrial growers, Christmas cacti are epiphytes. That refers to the fact that they grow suspended from tree trunks and hanging from rocks. Pieces of stems and seeds fall into leaf axils of their support trees and cracks in the rocks. The tiny plant parts develop roots, and stem growth begins. But even though it may rain 100 inches per year, these plants still have highly evolved ways of surviving without soil and during the dry seasons.

If you want to grow them at home...

A college prof once told me that he would teach me, not “how to grow plants,” but instead “how plants grow in their native homes” so I could recreate that in my own growing environment. That’s what we have to do when we try to grow Christmas cacti at home.

We must simulate those jungle conditions as closely as we can. Christmas cacti require highly organic, well-draining soils. Coarse-textured forms of organic matter such as sphagnum peat and finely ground pine bark mulch work well. What you don’t want is our heavy, sticky native soil or dense commercial potting soils.

Bright light is important, but not direct sunlight during the summer. Again, think of their native habitats. They grow within rainforest canopies. A sunny window indoors is good. That translates to bright shade outside.



A trick you may not know about...

Christmas cacti are photoperiodic. That means that they measure the length of the dark period. The plant hormone that initiates flower bud formation is destroyed by light, so if Christmas cacti are exposed to bright light at night it will delay their blooming. As with poinsettias, you’ll want to give them 14 hours of total and uninterrupted darkness each night beginning in early October. That will bring them into bloom by early December. But read that again carefully – darkness at night. They’ll still need their normal bright light during the daytime.

In fairness, it should be noted that Christmas cacti are not nearly as sensitive to brief interruptions of light in the night as poinsettias are, but you still need to give them the darkness at night as much as you can.

Starting more plants...

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Want to start more Christmas cacti plants? Each stem segment (those are stems, not leaves) is capable of forming roots.

- After the plant finishes blooming, carefully trim off pieces of stem with two or three segments.
- Lay them on a pot filled with the recommended planting mix.
- Keep the mix moist, and the segments will begin to form roots within just a few weeks.
- Once the roots are 1/2-inch long you can pot the cuttings up into the same planting mix, two or three cuttings per 4-inch pot.

And one of the coolest things about Christmas cacti is that they become family heirlooms that can be propagated and shared with all the family members that would like to have "plants Grandma grew decades ago!"



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 jnenders@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!!

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Words of Wisdom

To understand a man, you must understand his memories.

He who is thankful for little things enjoys much.

Put your will in neutral so that God can shift you.

Be a good listener. Your ears will never get you in trouble.

An early morning walk is a blessing for the whole day.

Those who roll up their sleeves seldom lose their shirts.

Hold those you love with open hands

Trust your friends as you do your pictures and put them in their best light.

Put everything in God's hand and eventually you will see God in everything.



On the Lighter Side

"Grandma, will you roll up my sleeves for me?" Taylor asked.

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"My hands can't see!"

MARY FOSNOW *Fort Mill, South Carolina*

Double Check

When my sons were little they had playmates, Randy and Rusty, who were identical twins. It was hard to tell them apart.

One day only one of the twins showed up. When I asked him which twin he was, the boy answered "Randy."

Thinking I'd have a little fun, I asked, "How can you tell? Because you look just like Rusty." He shrugged his shoulders and explained, "Because my name's in my coat."

LORRAINE WOOD *Gardnerville, North Carolina*

Word Blurt

When my daughters were playing in the barn. Laura, 4, said a bad word. Nancy, 3, ran into the house to tell on her.

In her defense, Laura cried, "Daddy. I opened my mouth and something icky came out."

NORMA JEAN BOREN *Brownsburg, Indiana*

Switching Sides

I have a friend who lives within a stone's throw of the Canadian border in northern New Hampshire. It seems the state needed to verify its border with Vermont and resurvey the state line.

Imagine their embarrassment when they discovered an old man who had lived in New Hampshire was actually in Vermont. So the two states sent an

official to his home to let him know about the error.

The official, with his hat in hand, knocked on the door and told the man he was living in Vermont, not New Hampshire. After revealing the news, he waited patiently for a reaction.

The man leapt in the air and cried out in delight. "Yes! No more of those long New Hampshire winters!"

BRYAN THERIEAU *Sarasota, Florida*

Chairman of the Board

A woman bragged to her new neighbor, "My husband sits on a board at a large and important lumber company." "Why?" asked her neighbor.

"Doesn't the office have chairs?"

MATTHEW THOMAS JR.
Bedford, Virginia

Common Horse Sense

The children in a rural Sunday school class were reviewing their vocabulary. "What is the opposite of joy?" the teacher asked. "Sadness," the class called out in unison.

"What's the opposite of woe?" "Giddy-up!" they said.

BRAD WESNER
Simpsonville, South Carolina

Please support these businesses who have agreed to give our members a discount at their stores in addition to being sponsors for our 2018 Pond Tour.

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