

HOTWGPS Newsletter

Volume 13 issue 9

December 2021

HOTWGPS Events

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!
HOTWGPS will not be meeting in December so we will see you all on January 18th at 6:30 PM. Location TBD.



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!!



This from the Pond Guy

Running a Pump Part-Time to Save on Electricity

Just about everyone is looking for ways to save money on their monthly bills - and you might think that turning off your pond's pump every night is one way to stretch some of your hard-earned cash.

Think again!

Though most pumps do cost a nominal amount of money to run 24/7, if you shut yours down each night, you could be affecting your pond's water quality and your

fishes' wellness, and that could cost you even more in the long run. Check out these top four reasons why you should keep your pump pumping:



Efficiency: Pond pump manufacturers understand that water gardeners are concerned about operating costs, so many of the designs on the market today are energy efficient and consume relatively little electricity. Pumps that used to cost \$100 a month or more to run have been replaced by models that cost as little as \$12 a month. Now that's some serious savings!

Filtration: In order for your filtration system to function properly, it needs moving water flowing through it - so if your pump is off, your water's not moving or being filtered, and that could do some damage to your pond's inhabitants. Plus, if all the water drains out of your filter, you could wind up with a loss of the beneficial bacteria that live on the media inside.

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Settled Debris: Moving water helps to keep debris suspended in the water column and pulled through the skimmer and filter for efficient removal. But if the pump is turned off, that debris will settle to the bottom of the pond and build up, creating a dense food source for nuisances like algae.

Oxygen Depletion: Still, quiet water - even just during the overnight hours - means that fewer water molecules are circulating and making contact with oxygen-rich air at the pond's surface. The stagnant water will be unable to release dangerous gases, like ammonia, and absorb life-giving oxygen. Moving water, however, ensures those molecules keep churning and exchanging bad gases for good.

If you still feel like you should shut down your pump each night, at least keep an aerator, running to keep the water circulating. An aeration kit consumes even less electricity than pumps - costing only pennies per month.



How to Pick Pond Plants

Aquatic plants are a perfect addition to any pond, not only do their colors add a great design element, but they also function to keep your water garden balanced and filtered. As any gardener knows, the first step in a successful garden is to plan what you want to plant. Below are a few points to consider when selecting plants for your pond.



Keep it Covered: Covering your pond's surface area with 40-60% plants will help to reduce excess nutrients, control algae blooms, and provide cover for your fish. For ponds up to 50 square feet, we recommend **6-12 floating plants, 2 bog plants, 5 submerged plants, and 1 water lily.**

Is it Warm Enough: Climates are different throughout the nation, which influences the types of plants that can be grown in those areas. The USDA publishes a **hardiness zone map** to help you determine which plants are likely to survive your local climate. Many aquatic plants are perennials, so choosing ones from your hardiness zone will be key because they are best able to tolerate the year-round weather conditions.

The Sun will Come Out: Plants are also categorized by which type of light they would like to receive (full sun, partial sun, partial shade, or full shade). **Sensitive Plant** prefers to lay out in the sun, but

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the **Chameleon Plant** likes to blend into the shade. Additionally, ponds with full sun exposure are more prone to algae growth, so add a few extra plants to help keep it shaded.

Deep or Shallow End: Some plants prefer deep water, where as some prefer it shallow. **Lilies** and **lotus** prefer deeper water once they are established, but **Blue Flag Iris** and other **bog plants** just like to get their roots wet. When you receive your plants, make sure you follow the planting directions, as deep water loving plants like to be in shallow water when they are getting started.

Flow or No: Water flow rate is often a factor that is overlooked, but some plants love moving water while others like it to stand still. **Dwarf Cattails**, for example, are hardy enough to grow in streams, but lilies do not flourish if they are under a waterfall.

Order Up: When selecting plants, the early bird gets the worm – or in this case the plant. Because pond keeping is seasonal, some plants are unavailable later in the year. To make sure that you get the ones you want, pre-order them early in the calendar year.

Plant Care

When ordering your plants, it is a good time to get the materials that you need for planting. Use soil that is designed for water gardens and avoid using bagged potting mix or other lightweight soils as they will float and cloud the water.

Lilies and Lotuses: Best grown in pots, such as the **Water Lily & Water Lotus**

Planting Kits. Fill your tub with clay and a clay/soil mix with **Aquatic Planting Media** on top. Position the bulb inside the container with the growing tip pointed up. Place in the pond so that the growing tip is in 3"-6" of water. Once the leaves reach the surface, you can place the pot in a deeper area of your pond.

Bog Plants: These also should be planted in containers filled with Planting Media. These can be planted round the edges of your pond using **Plant Bags** or inside the pond with the **Floating Island Planter**. Do not forget to **fertilize** your plants to give them the nutrients they need for beautiful blooms.

Submerged Plants: Can be grown in Plant Bags or other planters or tied to a weight and dropped into the pond.

Floating Plants: Simply place in the water and they will freely float and take up nutrients through their root systems. (*Editor note: if you have a skimmer, floating plants will surely end up in it!*)



Points To Ponder

"To pretend to know when you do not know is a disease." *Lao-Tzu*

"To educate a man in mind, and not in morals, is to educate a menace to society." *Theodore Roosevelt*

"The trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism." *Norman Vincent Peale*

"Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth." *Henry David Thoreau*

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On the lighter side

Sven visited Ole at the hospital on the day that Ole's son little Ole- was born.

"Sven, you won't believe what just happened," said Ole. "I was looking at little Ole in da nursery room when another dad said to me, 'My daughter was just born yesterday. Maybe someday our kids will meet and get married.'"

"That's nice Ole," said Sven. "What's da problem. Maybe that could really happen."

"Yeah, right," said Ole. "Like I'm going to let my little Ole marry a girl twice his age!"

A man traveling through the countryside stopped at Ole's small roadside fruit stand and bought some apples. When the man mentioned that the apples were awfully small, Ole replied, "Yup, that's right."

The man took a bite of one of the apples and exclaimed,

"Not very flavorful either."

"That's right," said Ole. "Lucky for you so small, ain't it?"

Ole was at a big toy store and pointed out a train set to the store clerk. "I'll take that one."

"I'm sure your son will like it, sir," said the clerk.

Ole sighed loudly, "I suppose you're right. You'd better give me two of them."

Lena told little Ole, as they waited for the bus, to tell the driver he was just 4 years old so he could ride for free.

As they got onto the bus, the driver asked Ole how old he was. "I am 4 years old,"

little Ole said.

"And when will you be 6 years old?" asked the driver. "When I get off da bus," answered little Ole.



Little Johnny and his friend Tommy were on their very first train ride. A vendor selling concessions came by, and Tommy's mother bought each child a candy bar. Johnny eagerly tore into his just as the train went into a tunnel. When the train emerged, Johnny saw that Tommy was still struggling with the wrapper.

"I wouldn't eat that if I were you," Johnny said to Tommy.

"Why not?" asked Tommy.

"Because I took one bite and went blind for half a minute."



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