

Pond Happenings

April 2011

A Monthly Newsletter Published
by the Greater Phoenix Pond
Society

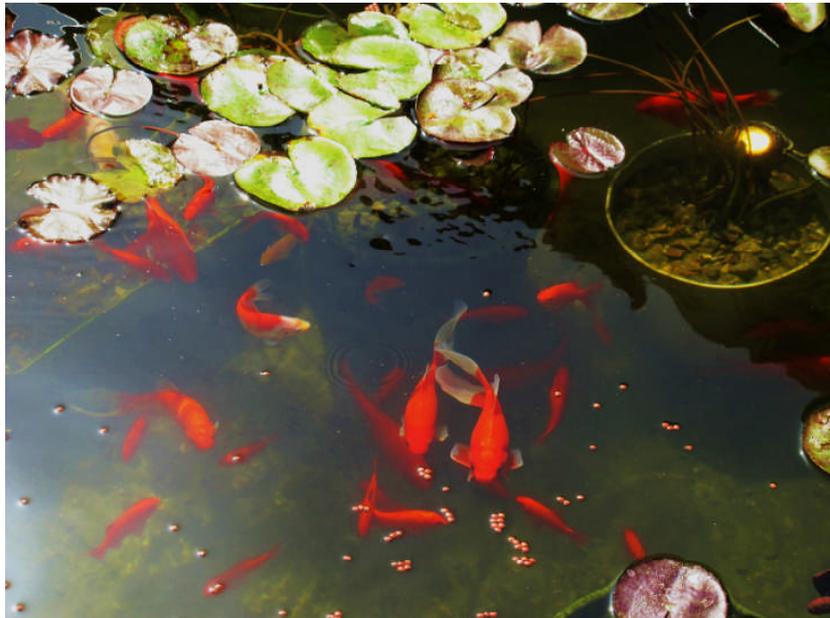
Next Meeting: April 9, 2011 – 9:00 a.m.

The April meeting will be held at the home of Richard and Pet Smith.

Their address is 3096 W. Ironwood Circle, Chandler, AZ 85226.
Phone is 480-821-9412.

Please Mapquest or call for directions.

Please bring your own lawn chairs and bags/buckets for any plants/fish that may be available.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Kristy & John Jolly of Gilbert
Dan Drane of Sun City**

HAVE YOU VISITED OUR WEBSITE? Logon to: www.phoenixponds.com

Pond Happenings

President's Letter



Hey GPPS members,

Well it's starting to heat up around here and I'm not just talking about the weather! It's ready April and next month is our 15th annual pond tour on the 7th of May. The main purpose of our pond tour is to promote our club and our hobby of ponds, water features and water gardens. We offer our tour free of charge to the public so we can get as many people as possible to go on the tour. The greater the attendance at the pond tour the greater the interest in ponds and our club, therefore an increase in membership in The Greater Phoenix Pond Society. So we need this to be an excellent tour.

We have two events prior to the pond tour where we are able to get the word out about the tour. The first is the Children's Kite Festival and Valley of the Sun Koi Show. This event is at Margret T. Hance Park and Japanese Friendship Gardens on April 2, 2011 from 9:00AM to 4:00PM. We will have booth set-up at the event and we will be passing out flyers for the pond tour as well as have information about the club and membership applications available. This is a fun event for the entire family so please come out and enjoy all of the events and support your club. There are plenty of activities for the kids, a food court specializing in Asian cuisine, the Koi show and other vendors. For more information and a map please visit our website, there are links on the home page.

The second event is the Maricopa County Home and Garden Show at the Arizona State Fairgrounds on April 29, 30 & May 1, 2011. We will have a booth inside the Garden Pavilion at the show all three days. Thousands of people come to the show and this is an outstanding opportunity for GPPS let everyone know about GPPS and the pond tour. Having booths set up at both of these events is a lot of work and we need volunteers to help at the booths during both of the events. Please go to our website for additional information and links. If you can volunteer some time for these events please contact me. Both of these have been extremely successful events for GPPS and we are looking forward to your assistance in making them even better this year.

The March meeting was at the home of Don and Fern Shaw. Thanks for opening up your beautiful yard and sharing your pond with the club. The speaker was Gary Ures and the topic was Fish diseases, hospital tanks and quarantine tanks, thanks Gary!

The April meeting is at the home of Richard and Pet Smith, you won't want to miss this one!

I hope to see you at the April meeting!

Dave Nelson - President

Using Kitty Litter for Pond Lilies

It's time to divide and repot your pond lilies again. Over the years, I've tried all kinds of planting media – everything from topsoil, to play sand, to expensive “pond soils” and all have worked to varying degrees of success. I've heard a few people mention kitty litter, so thought I'd use that this year. Faced with a myriad of litter choices at my neighborhood Pet Mega Mart, I thought I'd try a few different types and see how they compare.

You know, kinda like what Consumer Reports does.

Clumping – This initially seemed like a good idea to me. Just think - the moment your re-potted lilies hit the water, the surface of the litter would clump together, forming a crust. There'd be no soil spilling into the pond and clouding the water, and no gravel on the planter to inhibit new lily growth. After placing all 8 planters in the pond, I awoke the next morning to find approximately 30% of the pond water absorbed (take THAT, ShamWow!). Chipping the clumped litter off the rhizomes proved to be a chore. Clumping litter is not recommended.

Multi-Cat Formula – Since I have 30+ goldfish who all like to eat and swim around in their own “byproducts”, I figured the multi-cat approach might do well. Keep the pond “spring fresh” and all that. In goes 8 planters and a few hours later, the level of pond water was still normal. Success! The next morning, however, all the fish were swimming a little sideways, and didn't look like they were feeling well. I noticed that the blue odor crystals had worked loose from the litter, and floated to the surface, where the fish had been eating them all night (fresh tasting!).

Thankfully, I have a medical tank on standby, so I wrangled all 30+ goldfish into the net and transferred them there, along with a box of “Gentle Laxative Tablets”, courtesy of my neighborhood Pharmacy Mega Mart. Not sure what the difference is between “Gentle” and “Regular” tablets, but the former sounded like the better of the two options. I mean, that's what I'd want, if given a choice.

Everyone was feeling better the next day and were happily transferred back to the pond (sans multi-cat filled planters). Multi-cat litter is not recommended.

Silica Pellets - Maybe something more hi-tech was in order? This is a cutting edge, new-fangled litter. While controversy exists around the short and long-term health effects (carcinogenic) of the silica dust on both you and your cats, I figured in a pond, dust wouldn't matter. Plus, it had a slightly milky, translucent color that reflected my pond lights in a tantalizing array of colors at night. Pretty! I knew for sure that silica was the way to go. The next day, however, the fish were swimming a bit off, and I realized that they'd been eating the silica pellets all night (the package says “Not for internal use.”).

Back in the med tank, another box of GLTs and a day later, and the fish were happy again. Silica pellets are not recommended.

Using Kitty Litter for Pond Lillies (cont.)

Recycled Paper – Being gravely concerned about my carbon footprints (which I tend to leave on the hallway carpet after coming in through the garage), I thought 80% post-consumer waste paper might be the way to go. All natural, except for the toxic chemicals used to create the paper pulp, which could only help inhibit parasites in the pond. This one was sure to be a winner! Only one planter made it in though, as the paper pellets immediately lifted out of the planter, and began to float around the pond. The goldfish, sensing another culinary adventure, began to eat them readily. Being proactive, I moved everyone to the aforementioned med tank, added yet another box of GLTs (are these habit forming?) and gave everyone 24 hours to recuperate. That also allowed me time to clean out the soggy paper that was now clogging the pump and filter. Recycled paper pellets are not recommended.

Cedar pellets – I passed on these, realizing that they'd just float out of the pots, the fish would eat them, and I'd have to buy another box of GLTs. Goldfish will eat anything...

While I haven't yet found the ideal type of litter to use, I haven't given up on my quest to find an innovative, cost-effective planting media for my lilies. For example, my neighbor across the street has a cat that prefers using the carpet in multiple rooms, rather than kitty litter. That's when it occurred to me – carpet may be a viable alternative. It's inexpensive, readily available (look for anyone remodeling in your neighborhood), and I can use my pond vacuum to keep it clean! I'll post an update in next month's newsletter.

Matt Watson
(Happy April 1st!)



Thank you to Don and Fern Shaw for hosting the March meeting.

Presenter Gary Ures

Pond Happenings



On March 19, Dan Drane, Tom Knight, Ed Tunstall, Susan Smithwick and Gloria Skylstad, supervised by Gene Goerke, turned out at the Japanese Friendship Garden to finish the bog project. We separated the last bed of Iris and replanted them and fertilized all the Iris and Lily beds. The beds look beautiful and a good time was had by all. Susan will be showing up on the cover of Vogue for the innovative way she chose to wear her waders. Thank you to the GPPS for furnishing the fertilizer and thank you to the volunteers.



All photos: Gloria Skylstad



Pond Happenings

From The Web:

Webmaster Dennis Beard has posted the following events on the webpage www.phoenixponds.com. Please check the webpage for more information.

Valley of the Sun Koi Club, Inc
Koi Show and Phoenix Children's Festival
Saturday, April 2, 2011
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Phoenix Bonai Society
Saturday, Apr 9
****9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.****

1st Annual Bonsai Show at Valley Garden Club

Maricopa County Home and Garden Show

****April 29, 30, May 1, 2011 ****

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We have all learned (usually the hard way) how important pH is to having a healthy, beautiful pond.

But what if...the pH keeps bouncing around like it is afflicted with A.D.D.? Often this is due to the KH of the pond water being too low. KH is the relative hardness of the water. Ideally, the KH should be around 80, for Koi ponds as much as 120 is recommended. Anything below 80 will eventually hamper not only pH values but also the beneficial bacteria.

How do you know your KH? It can be measured!
Like all adjustments to pond water, KH and pH should be adjusted slowly and according to manufacturer's directions to avoid stressing (or even killing) the pond fish.

Motto: Do it right in the Spring and the Pond is easy as pie all season!

Courtesy: www.pondmarket.com

Pond Happenings

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Dave Nelson	Bigd_1956@yahoo.com	480-357-7205
Vice President	Nina Koepcke	Nkdragonlady166@gmail.com	
Treasurer	Ed Tunstall	lctricfrog@cox.net	
Secretary	Fern Shaw	Fdg1953@cox.net	602-332-8112
Events Coordinator	Dan Stough		
Newsletter Editor	Gloria Skylstad	gskylstad@cox.net	
Librarian	Gary Ures		480-306-6417
Webmaster	Dennis Beard	dbeard_html@hotmail.com	--

GPPS Updates

GPPS Newsletter

Monthly Submission Deadline: 18th of each month. Newsletters will be sent out the 28th of each month. All submissions are subject to review and all materials become the property of GPPS. Due to space and timing, it is not guaranteed that all submissions will be printed. Submissions can be emailed to "gppsnews@bluefish.biz".

Did you know? Receiving an electronic version will save GPPS Members money every month. Contact gskylstad@gmail.com if you'd like to change your newsletter option to "paperless".



2011 Pond Tour

Contact Nina Koepcke at nkdragonlady166@gmail.com if you wish to participate in the upcoming pond tour. 2011 Pond Tour date is set for May 7, 2011 from 9:00 a.m. thru 4:00 p.m.

Have a tip, trick, recommendation or idea? Send it to gskylstad@gmail.com

Pond Happenings

Upcoming Meetings & Events			
Month	Location	Month	Location
May	2011 Pond Tour	August	No Meeting
June11	Jeff & Rita Karsten, Chandler	Sept 10	Dan & Carol Catlin, Mesa
July	No Meeting	Oct 8	Mike & Karen Valenzuela, Chandler

A request from GPPS Webmaster Dennis Beard

GPPS has "FAQs" that are listed on the <http://www.phoenixponds.com/archive/gppsfaq.htm> web page. This page is now a link on the left navigation bar titled -- guess? FAQs

I solicit your assistance in helping the club's website. Please write some questions with the answers and send them to the webmaster link on the FAQ page. If you know a good outside source to your answer -- copy the address at the bottom of the supplied answer.

Time To Rejoin GPPS for 2011!

Membership forms will be on the table at the monthly meetings or contact the treasurer, Ed Tunstall, 5439 E. Dolphin Ave, Mesa, AZ 85206-2208.

The cost is \$25 to join or renew your membership. Dues should be received by December 31st.



11058 W. Oraibi Dr
Sun City, AZ 85373

Happy Easter!