

## Cool Weather Brings Changes For Ponds, Fish and Plants

Every new season brings something different to our ponds and gardens, and with changes in temperature come changes in how we do things. As winter approaches, some St. Louis Water Gardening Society members are thinking about how to best protect their pumps, filters and other mechanics from the harsh winter's cold. Others are thinking about more precious assets—their favorite fish. And, there are a few who are already thinking about next spring—and how to minimize the problems they will face when it's time to gear up again

after the snow and ice have melted.

Our annual panel of experts on closing down for the winter has become a perennial favorite. It doesn't matter how many times you have been through it all, there are always things you don't remember—or



Overmann



Nies



Summers

that you need to have updated. This year's panel will cover all the various aspects of winter preparations and care.

Handling questions about the pond will be John Nies. Should the pump stay in the pond through the winter or come out? If it comes out, what should be done with it until it is needed again? Why should I put

### Don't Miss This!

**What:** Panel of Experts—Closing the Pond for Winter

**Where:** Missouri Botanical Garden, Beaumont Room

**When:** Tuesday, September 27, 7 p.m., the FOURTH Tuesday in August

**Who:** Joe Summers on Plants, John Nies on Construction and Maintenance, Rich Overmann on Fish

a net on the pond—and how soon should it be done.

Joe Summers will talk about plants. What must you do with the hardy lilies and other aquatic plants? Do you divide plants now or in the spring? What happens to the tropical plants that are in the pond?

The number one question about fish is usually what to feed them in the winter if anything? If nothing, when do I stop and when should I start up again? Rich Overmann will field these and other questions about caring for your fish through the winter.



**Winners All**—Above left: David Schiele, on the left, was given the Ganim Service Award at the annual Awards Banquet. Steven Metzler, on the right, received the Bonnie Alford Service Award. Above right: Dave Stahre, president of SLWGS presented the 2011 Volunteer Spirit Award to Pamela Jokerst.

## Volunteers Presented Service Awards



St. Louis Water Gardening Society members who have done outstanding work for the organization received much deserved honors last month.

Steven Metzler was given the Bonnie Alford Service Award, David Schiele received the Ganim Service Award, and Pamela Jokerst was presented the 2011 Volunteer Spirit Award.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to members who also made significant contributions to the Society in the past year. Those honored included Keith and Carolyn Haus, noted for their support of Pond-O-Rama,

Jeanne Lehr for her handling of the SLWGS library; Linda Barr for her continuing commitment to the Jewel Box project; David Poos, as a new member making significant contributions; Joe and Tonya Summers for their overall support of the organization.

The awards were presented at the Annual SLWGS Banquet, held August 16 at the Jewel Box in Forest Park, by David Stahre, president of SLWGS, and Alice Gibson, vice-president.

The Bonnie Alford Service Award is named for the founder of the St. Louis Water Gardening

Continued on page 2

## Volunteers Presented Service Awards

(Continued from page 1)

Society and is awarded annually to a person who has been a member of the society for at least three years and who has made “measurable and significant contributions to SLWGS.”

Metzler was nominated and given the award in recognition of his work as the AKCA representative for SLWGS, his contribution to the success of our first-ever koi auction held in his driveway last summer, and his care and handling of the SLWGS sound system.

The **Ganim Service Award** honors Don and Lizanne Ganim. The award is given annually to a member who has been a member of the society for no less than 60 days, and who, during the past year, has gone beyond the call of duty for SLWGS.

Dave Schiele was nominated and given the award for his

continued support of Society activities. He was a part of the Pond-O-Rama organizing committee, and served as a ticket runner. He also is a regular volunteer at the Jewel Box pools, the service project of the society.

The Volunteer Spirit Award was established in 2010 to honor Ray Mueller, a SLWGS volunteer killed in April of that year. , Virginia Mueller, who was away on vacation, nonetheless presented this year’s award to Pam Jokerst via a special letter read by Alice Gibson. Dave Stahre presented the award to Jokerst. Her letter said, in part, “At last year’s Annual Banquet I was overwhelmed and surprised to receive the first SLWGS Volunteer Spirit Award named in honor of my husband. Ray’s adventurous spirit and his enthusiasm about life was contagious. He was always willing to share what he knew and to do whatever anyone needed to have done—and he did it with a smile and with a generosity of spirit that inspired others to reach out and help. The St. Louis Water Gardening Society’s

Volunteer Spirit Award is given to honor a SLWGS member who shows exceptional spirit in volunteer work, and who inspires others to do the same.

“The award is not necessarily an annual award, but it will be given ‘when the spirit moves us’ to do so. This year, we have been so moved. The award says on the front ‘The Spirit Within Nourishes...’ We have been nourished by a creative, talented, warm spirit that is contagious.

“The 2011 Volunteer Spirit Award winner moves us in more ways than one. The volunteer efforts go above and beyond at every event and every meeting, and reach outward to members of the community who may never have heard of our work otherwise. A welcoming spirit is always shown to everyone.

“A tremendous advocate of our Society, she also keeps us informed, encourages us to research and provides opportunities for us to explore and to learn, and always exhibits enthusiasm, a willingness to share with everyone, and to do whatever needs to be done. This society is literally moved by her efforts.”

The Certificate of Appreciation presented to Linda Barr was in recognition of her continuous loyalty to the Jewel Box project and her advocacy for SLWGS to the community. Carolyn and Keith Haus were recognized for their support of Pond-O-Rama, specifically for handling ticket booklet distributions. The couple also repaired broken Pond-O-Rama signs and made new ones for the 2011 tour.

Jeanne Lehr was honored for her continued management of the SLWGS library following the death of her husband, Roger, who had been the librarian.

David Poos was honored as a new member who has embraced the society and pitched in to help. Poos has been our treasurer since last fall’s election.

Joe and Tonya Summers were recognized for their support of the Society’s projects, including our annual auction and the Jewel Box project. Summers secures Victoria lily plants for the Jewel Box each year, and gives short presentations about plants at each meeting.



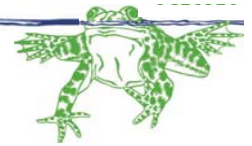
### **Thank You Very Much!**

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to volunteers who made significant contributions to the organization. Shown above, at the banquet, are Carolyn and Keith Haus, David Poos and Jeanne Lehr. Linda Barr, above left, and Joe and Tonya Summers with son, Chas, right, were presented their certificates after the banquet.





## Presidential Ponderings



Hi folks! Well, we are approaching a significant milestone: We are halfway through my second term as President. What fun it has been—especially last month. Our guest speaker at the banquet was Paula Biles, author and noted Lotus expert. And, wow, did we have fun with her!

Paula is very personable to begin with and the hospitality shown by the membership overwhelmed her! I must say it kind of overwhelmed me too! Since Paula wanted to extend her visit to St. Louis a few days, members fell all over each other to make sure that she was comfortable and entertained. I accompanied an entourage to the Boat House in Forest Park for dinner with her the night before the banquet. At the banquet Paula entertained us all with stories, facts and trivia about the regal lotus.

In addition to Paula's presentation, we made some of our own—the annual Service Awards were presented. Steve Metzler received the Bonnie Alford Service Award; Dave Schiele was given the Gamin Award; and the Volunteer Spirit Award, which honors Ray Mueller, was presented to Pam Jokerst. In addition we handed out Certificates of Appreciation to Dave Poos, Linda Barr, Jeanne Lehr, Keith and Carolyn Haus and Joe and Tonya Summers. All their contributions are greatly appreciated.

Stay tuned next month for our Fall shutdown panel of experts and for Cindy Gilberg's presentation in October. Also a reminder that we WILL have a November meeting—a pot luck dinner.

Well, folks, there have been big changes at the White House. To begin with after completing six two-year terms the first lady decided mid-seventh term that she did not want to continue in the role as First Lady. Since the White House actually belongs to her, that meant that the president (me) had to find another residence. And, since the pond and its inhabitants are considered to be "my bag" that meant they

needed to find a new home also. Poor "Sammy the Snake" has been left behind to fend for himself. My recommendation to him was to also find another place to live as the first lady has it in for him.

I have been lucky enough to find another house (coincidentally also white). The biggest problem is that it does not have a pond. It looks like the temporary solution will be to press the spring cleanout pool into service. It is somewhat smaller than the pond in total volume, but close. More significantly, it will not be in-ground and may require additional heat to keep it hospitable in the winter. As far as wildlife goes I'm living with Smokey the cat and I understand there is an obnoxious neighborhood squirrel named "Squiggy" that I'll have to deal with who is known for gnawing on garbage cans (like the one that I keep my Koi food in).

So far the fish seem oblivious to the situation. I have reduced the amount of food I have given them to help keep the water quality good. Only Tubby is complaining significantly. The old girl is hardly wasting away but yet is doing a very good imitation of a "fish pout" when I come close without giving her food. I never realized that fish actually have quite expressive faces. I'm getting disgusted looks from all of the Koi and most of the gold fish, and I thought I heard a threatening sequence of bubbles the other day. Oh well, at any rate I'll keep you posted on what happens.

Another consequence of these events is that there will be several tons of weathered field stone available for the taking for anyone that wants to drive to Baldwin.

Well, folks in spite of everything, I'm in good spirits. I'll keep you posted about my adventures in the backyards of Belleville.

In the meantime, get your winter questions ready. I'll see you at the meeting.

*Dave Stahre*



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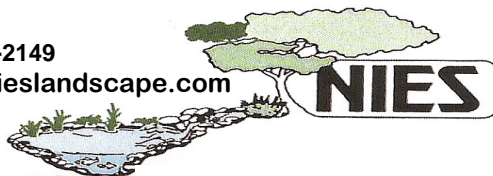
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## St. Louis Water Gardening Society Calendar of Events 2011

Membership meetings in 2011 will be held on the dates and at the locations listed below between 7 and 9 p.m. on the **FOURTH TUESDAY** of each month unless otherwise noted.

**September 24**—Annual Tiki Tour, an evening tour of members' ponds. All ponds on this tour will need to have lights in and around the pond. For more information see page 5 or contact **Pam Jokerst**, special events coordinator, (314) 276-9461, [pamjokerst@gmail.com](mailto:pamjokerst@gmail.com).

**September 27**— "Panel of Experts: Fall Shutdown," including **Joe Summers** on plants, **John Nies** on construction and maintenance, and **Rich Overmann** on fish; 7 p.m., Missouri Botanical Garden, Ridgway Center, Beaumont Room.

**October 25**— "Trees and Shrubs for Moist Areas," **Cindy Gilberg**, horticulturist and garden consultant, 7 p.m., Missouri Botanical Garden, Ridgway Center, Beaumont Room.

**November 15**—End of the year holiday social and pot luck supper, 7 p.m., Missouri Botanical Garden, Ridgway Center, Beaumont Room.

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# Saving Beautiful Tropical Water Lilies

If you have invested in the beautiful blooms created by the tropical water lilies, you hate to see the cool weather. This summer, especially, the blooms in the Jewel Box pools have been large and plentiful. The sun-loving southerners have enjoyed the extreme heat of 2011. The *N. Orchid Star*, at right, not only produced large and abundant blooms, but also produced far-reaching runners for its leaves. In the photo below, Steve Harris and Wayne Gibson stretch out one such leaf and stem that is nearly 18' long.

This great plant, like all the other tropicals, will not care for the cold that is coming, however, and neither will the ones you have enjoyed in your pond. If you want to try to save them to enjoy again next summer, Joe Summers of Chalily Pond and Gardens offers some advice. Summers says you can over-winter tropical lilies using a simple procedure. Next spring, you can "wake up" the sleeping beauties and wait for the blooms.

Follow the step-by-step procedures below to save your favorite tropical lilies.

**Step One:** Remove your potted tropical water lily from the pond. If the outside air temperature is above 50 degrees you can leave the pot outside. If it is below 50 degrees move your plant to a warmer location indoors.

**Step Two:** After the plant has dried out for one week, it's time to take off all the soil, roots and leaves. You are looking for the tuber, which is directly under the center of the plant. The tuber



can range from the size of a marble to the size of a baseball.

**Step Three:** Wash off all the soil and cut any roots or leaves off. After a good cleaning allow the tuber to air-dry overnight.

**Step Four:** Moisten clean sand. Be sure the sand is barely damp (not wet). If the sand is too wet, the tubers will rot.

**Step Five:** Pack the tubers in an airtight container. Place a layer of moistened sand in the bottom and then a tuber. Add more sand to fill the container and seal. Label the outside of the container.

**Step Six:** Place the tuber containers in a cool, dark place. The temperature should be between 50 and 70 degrees. A basement is an ideal location.

**Step Seven:** Check your container about once per month. You are looking for mold or rotting tubers. If your tubers are soft, discard them. If they have mold wash it off and allow the tuber to dry over night. Then store the tuber in new sand.

You can leave tubers in storage for up to five years, as long as they remain firm and healthy. If you want to replant them, brush off the sand from the firm tuber and place it in the same kind of pot and soil it was in before and place it in your pond. Make sure the water temperature is warm enough (60 degrees at least) before you put the tropical plants back in the pond.



  
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*Water Word* is published by the St. Louis Water Gardening Society 10-11 times annually, and is distributed to all members. The newsletter contains information about water gardening and fish-keeping, as well as information about SLWGS meetings and activities. Contributions of articles and photos are welcome and should be sent to the Water Word editor listed below. Documents should be in common text formats, and photos should be in high resolution (300 dpi or higher) jpeg format. The deadline for submissions is the first of each month.

SLWGS membership dues are \$20 annually per household. Information about the Society, including how to join, can be found at our website, [www.slwgs.org](http://www.slwgs.org) or from any of the officers, board members or coordinators listed below.

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Take a look—go to [www.slwgs.org](http://www.slwgs.org) for all the latest news, information and relevant links! Let our website coordinator, Joan Woelfel, know about any changes you would like. Send an e-mail to [joan.woelfel@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joan.woelfel@sbcglobal.net).





## Did You Miss This?

### The Fascinating Lotus

According to Paula Biles, there is nothing bad about a lotus...the foliage is fascinating, the flowers are gorgeous, the plant provides a food source, decorative elements for flower arrangements and many other things—and you can't take a bad photograph of it at any stage.

Biles, author, lecturer and lotus lover, was the keynote speaker for the St. Louis Water Gardening Society's Annual Award



The *Nelumbo lutea*, native to North America from southern Canada to northern Mexico, has the largest native flower in the United States.



banquet held at the Jewel Box in Forest Park in August. Biles, of Bradenton, Fla., is the co-author with Kelly Billing of "The Lotus—Know It and Grow It."

Her theme for the evening was to define for SLWGS members what a lotus is—and what it is not. First, she noted, lotuses have been grown for thousands of years. In fact, lotus seeds have been found in ancient ruins—a lotus seed that was estimated to be 2,000 years old has been planted and produced a living plant.

All parts of the lotus are used for something. The rhizomes are cut and fried and the leaves are steamed for food. At one time, the silk filaments in the stems were used to create garments for monks.

Lotuses have some things in common with the beautiful and colorful koi, she said. They both are beautifully colored—lotus are yellow, orange, pink and white. Both regulate their own body temperatures, both have been revered for centuries and both have been sent into outer space.

"People who grow either or both of them become addicted to them," she said. What are the differences?

"Lotus smell better and grow higher, but they won't do tricks or eat from your hand," she said.

Although some countries and cultures use the terms *Nymphaea* (water lilies) and *Nelumbo* (lotus) interchangeably, they are not the same. Lotus has its own botanical family, genus and species. There are only two species of lotus—*Nelumbo lutea* and *Nelumbo nucifera*. *N. lutea* is the native North American lotus seen primarily from southern Canada to northern Mexico. *N. nucifera* is also known as the Asian or sacred lotus, and is seen

Continued on page 8



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All parts of the lotus are used—some for food, some for crafts, some for floral arrangements, some to make fabric and paper. Above, a vendor in an Asian marketplace sells lotus pods while shading his head with a large leaf, a trick our own Joan Woelfel learned at the Jewel Box with a leaf from our own lotus plant.



## Did you miss this? The Fascinating Lotus

(Continued from page 7)

throughout Asia, Persia, India, Japan, China and other eastern countries. There are many cultivars, but all are hybrids of those two species.

One of the many myths about lotus is the belief that the lotus represents the center of the universe. “It grows in mud or muck and comes up as a beautiful flower. The Buddhists use it as a symbol for people. No matter how low in the muck you get, you can rise above it and be beautiful,” Biles said.

The lotus does grow from long roots that are underground or submerged in wet area. The roots send up little sprouts, and then leaves that float on the water. Finally, you see the arial leaves that rise above the water in stately groups.

Lotus are planted 3”-8” deep below the water line in mud. “You need a minimal amount of soil. You can anchor the plant in place with a rock. When you plant it, cut off the leaves that are above the water line.”

The main thing lotus plants need to thrive are light and heat, but they also should be fertilized to encourage blooming, but wait until the arial leaves have appeared to fertilize, Biles said.

The American lotus has the largest flower native to the United States. It adds a dramatic accent to a landscape when planted in a pond, but also is great as a container plant that can be placed anywhere in the yard or patio that gets enough sun.

If you want to collect the seed pods to use as decorative items, leave them on the stem until dry. If you don’t want to collect them, cut them off after the bloom has died to encourage more growth.”

To control lotus growth, which can be quite vigorous, plant them in pots to place in a pond—not directly in the pond soil or rock. If unwanted growth occurs, cut the plants off below the water line, which causes most plants to drown. Remove the cut foliage to keep it from decaying in the water.

To learn more about planting and growing lotus visit [www.aboutthelotus.com](http://www.aboutthelotus.com). Copies of “The Lotus: Know It and Grow It” can be ordered there. Also visit [www.iwgs.org](http://www.iwgs.org) for articles, photos and additional resources about lotus.

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### Types of Lotuses

There are hundreds of *Nelumbo* cultivars in a tremendous variety of colors, forms and sizes, according to Paula Biles and Kelly Billing in their book, “The Lotus: Know It and Grow It.” However, there are ways to categorize lotuses by some common characteristics. Here are a few:

**Plant sizes—bowl, dwarf, medium and large.** Lotus can be grown in containers as small as a teacup or in a large lake. The bowl lotus is a Chinese cultivar bred to be grown in containers under 11”.

**Plant Hardiness—tropical or hardy.** Most lotuses are hardy plants that go dormant in the winter and return in the spring. Tropical lotuses grow in humid tropical and subtropical climates where there is no killing frost and the pond waters never freeze. Tropical lotuses produce 3-4 times as many flowers.

**Plant Structure—growing from a submerged and segmented root system.** Lotuses are classified by the number of petals a flower has—single, with 25 or fewer petals; semi-double, with 25-50 petals, and double, with 50 or more.



# Scenes From a Fun Evening

St. Louis Water Gardening Society members and guests enjoyed a lovely evening at the Jewel Box for its annual Awards Banquet. Clockwise from the far right column are Marty Coulter, an artist known for his architectural and garden paintings who was invited by Pam Jokerst to work on a portrait of the grand old jewel prior to the event, then stay for dinner where the painting was on display during the evening. Coulter and Jokerst discuss the work at the end of the evening. Mary Anne and Dan Chevalier, from Springfield, Ill., travelled south for the evening. Pat and Phil Henderson, Edie and Rob Smith, Bob and Elaine Temper, Joe and Rita Zeitz relaxed and enjoyed the evening. Rick Jokerst congratulated Steve Metzler and Dave Schiele on their service awards; Keith and Carolyn Haus posed for a candid shot; Bob Temper and Cathy Schallenberg took the microphone to tell members about the recent members' overnight bus trip to Iowa; Jim and Donna Mussulman relax before dinner; Dave and Joan Poos and Keith Haus have a private moment.



**Is there still a Pond-O-Rama sign hanging around in your garage? Please don't make it spend the winter out there in the cold—send it home! If you need to make travel arrangements for it, call Alice at (618) 876-1628.**



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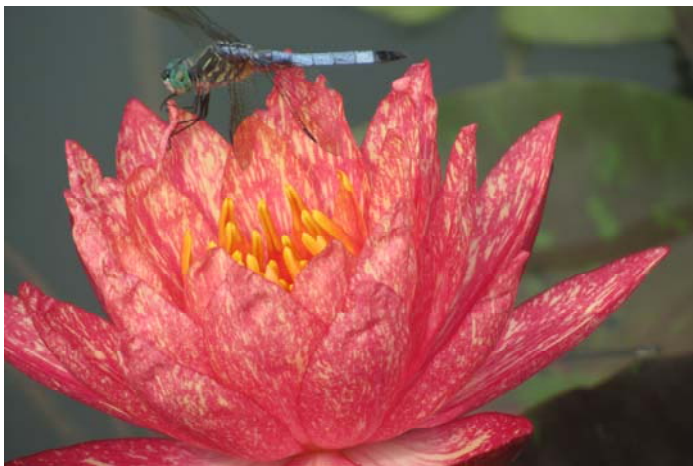
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## The Incidental “Perks” of Volunteerism



*As a regular volunteer at the Jewel Box, it is easy to get close-up photos of the lilies in our collection to document their growth and development. It has been fun to record the growth pattern and the blooms of the hardy Nymphaea Wanvisa, enjoying its first season in the Jewel Box pools. The dragonfly was a bonus arranged by Mother Nature for good volunteers.*

There are many good reasons to volunteer for any community service or charitable organization. It is the duty of all good citizens to make positive contributions to the community in which they live. Doing so gives the volunteer positive rewards—a feeling of well-being that comes from providing service, having the ability to share knowledge and information with interested people, seeing all the smiles on faces of those served, and gaining a sense of purpose shared with other volunteer workers.

Volunteers working on the civic project of the St. Louis Water Gardening Society—planting and maintaining the lily pools in front of the Jewel Box—get all of the above and more. The chance to get “up close and personal” with the wonders of nature is a perk not enjoyed by all volunteers. A new and wonderful “photo op” is presented almost weekly.

At left is a photo of our hardy water lily *N. ‘Waniisa’* enjoying its inaugural season at the Jewel Box. The lily was the 2010 International Water Gardening & Water Lily Society’s Water Lily of the Year, and it was offered for sale the first time this season.