A-Z Everything You Wanted to Know about Growing Lotus

Our June Speaker is an international super star when it comes to Lotus. Laura Bancroft owns and manages Ten Mile Creek Nursery in Hartford, Alabama. Ten Mile Creek Nursery is the largest grower of lotus cultivars in the United States, growing more than 300 varieties of lotus from all over the world.

Laura’s talk is titled, “A-Z. Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Growing Lotus”. She will share information about classification, preparation, planting and growing lotus in pots and ponds. Laura will teach us how to grow from tubers and seeds.

Don’t Miss This!

What: A-Z Everything You Ever Wanted to know about Growing Lotus

Where: Missouri Botanical Garden, Ridgway Center, Beaumont Room

When: Tuesday, June 18, at 7:00 p.m.

Who: Laura Bancroft, Ten Mile Nursery

Ten Mile Creek Nursery has sold thousands of potted lotuses and dormant tubers and has recently begun to harvest thousands of pounds of lotus biomass every year for biochemical research and development companies who use it in health and beauty products. A graduate of Auburn University (B.S.) and the University of Alabama (M.A., SecEd, Biology), she is a retired teacher, wife, mother and happy grandmother to seven beautiful little Bancrofts! https://www.facebook.com/tenmilecreeknurserylotus/
IT’S POND-O-RAMA TIME!

HOSTS: Come at 6:00 p.m. for our host party. Pick up your feather flag, host gift and instructions, and have a bite while we review important tips for a successful tour.

MEMBERS: Pick up your Pond-O-Rama ticket booklet after 6:45 p.m. You can buy extra tickets too. The tour is in four days!!
SLWGS PRESIDENT’S CORNER

To say the least, the May meeting started with an exciting prelude. Several SLWGS members arrived early to help set up and assist in distributing Pond-O-Rama ticket booklets to the members. With sirens blaring, MoBot security marched everyone into the theater. Joining us was a MoBot plant class and a group of young girls and their leaders. Both groups continued with their activities and we had social time!

The weather passed by leaving just a bit of rain but did prevent our guest speaker from the St. Louis Carnivorous Plant Society from making the meeting. I had prepared a short video on growing carnivorous plants in your garden and answered a few questions. Actually, all in all the meeting was informative and the members present seemed to enjoy the time.

As a reminder to the Pond-O-Rama hosts, there will be a 6:00 p.m. meeting prior to the regular June 18th meeting. Host bags will be distributed with this year’s special host gift. If you have not picked up your POR 2019 ticket booklet, Joan and crew will be on hand to give you your copy. With the change in the by-laws last year regarding membership, each member receives ONE ticket.

Our June speaker is Laura Bancroft from Ten Mile Creek Nursery, will be speaking on Lotus. I have heard Laura before and she is a wealth of knowledge about lotus as well as an interesting speaker. Please plan to join us!

At the May board meeting two motions were made and passed. The board approved the purchase of Directors and Officers coverage along with fiduciary insurance. The 2019 operating budget included this purchase and funds were allocated. Additionally the board has recommended that the SLWGS plaques at the Jewel Box be updated.

The board will not be meeting this month at Young’s restaurant but rather at the Missouri Botanical Garden for a special event.

Enjoy your garden!

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Henson
President, SLWGS
Membership meetings in 2019 will be held on the dates and at the locations listed below between 7 and 9 p.m. Meetings will be held at the Missouri Botanical Garden Ridgway Center, Beaumont Room, on the third Tuesday of the month unless otherwise noted.

**January 15** — Jack Lane “History of the Missouri Botanical Garden”

**February 19** — Cancelled Due to Weather

**March 19** — Angela McDonnell, Wild Birds Unlimited, Florissant Store. “Hummingbirds—The Jewels of the Skies”

**April 16** — SLWGS Auction

**May 21** — “Plants that Bite Back— Bog Gardens and Carnivorous Plants”

**June 18** — Laura Bancroft from Ten Mile Creek Nursery “A-Z Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Growing Lotus”

**June 22-23** — Pond-O-Rama

**July 16** — Josh Higgings “Reptiles and amphibians in the Water Garden”

**August 20** — Jewel Box Banquet

**September 17** — Speaker TBD

**October 15** — Betsy Alexander “Preventing Winter Damage to Your Plants”

**November 19** — Annual Potluck Dinner & Election of Officers, in the CBEC Building, 4651 Shaw Ave.

Nominations will be accepted for the positions of Vice President and Treasurer to serve two-year terms beginning in January 2020.

Board meetings are held at Young’s Restaurant one week after our general meeting at 7 p.m.

Young’s Restaurant & Ice Cream
206 Meramec Station Rd
Valley Park, MO 63088

Note: The July board meeting will be in at the MoBot At a Special Event.
Our backyard oasis began as most designs do, as a visualization. After several months of research and sketches, I began construction. With my spray-painted outline, strings, and stakes in place, I began to hand dig my pond. The distinctive feature of my pond is its peninsula. Initially, I thought I could use some equipment to assist me in the dig; however, the topography and the design dictated it be dug by hand.

Currently, the pond is 15' x 9' and is approximately 3.5' deep. Its key features are the peninsula and the waterfall. The peninsula is home to a stunning dwarf Japanese maple, fern, and stone cap sedum. I selected the delicate maple and other Japanese plants like the Japanese forest grasses as a nod to an Asian aesthetic.

The 3,900-gallon water feature is home to both standard koi, butterfly koi, and other pond creatures. The pond was completed in 2018, and since then I have planted a total of 8 new trees on the surrounding property. With help from a dear friend and local St. Louis landscape designer, we came up with an overall framework. Each season I add more plants to our design.

The waterfall is made from reclaimed stone bricks from a 100-year-old St. Louis building. I selected them from "Architectural Artifacts of St. Louis." I hand built the waterfall bookended by planter beds. These beds are filled with native flowering plants that will spill over and soften the hardscape. As with all our gardens, they are in a constant state of change and renewal.

**Members’ Corner:**

We have a few birthdays in June so “Happy Birthday” this month to:

- Gail Abernathy 6-10
- Del Baynes 6-4
- Raplh Merola 6-30
- Gail Bowman 6-15
- LaMotte 6-24

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**Pond of the Month New Member Bryan Cox**
Water Word is published by the St. Louis Water Garden Society 10 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.

Information about the Society, including how to join, can be found at our website, www.slwgs.org or from any of the officers and board members listed:

2019 SLWGS Officers
President
Bob Henson (314) 495-4233 hatt8v92@aol.com
Vice President
Joe Summers (636) 527-2001 chalilypond@aol.com
Treasurer
Ginny Mueller (314) 831-3063 vcmueller16@hotmail.com
Recording Secretary
Betsy Meier (636) 405-1120 lidodeck@att.net

2019 Board Members
Publicity Chairman
Ginny Mueller (314) 831-3063 vcmueller16@hotmail.com
Special Events Chairman
Tonya Summers (314) 494-9794 tonya2summers@aol.com
Librarian
Betsy Meier (636) 405-1120 lidodeck@att.net
Membership/E-mail Chairman
Gail Abernathy (314) 427-7076 abernat@swbell.net
Jewel Box Chairman
Kay Miskell (618) 344-6216 km99@att.net
Water Word Editor
Gail Abernathy (314) 427-7076 abernat@swbell.net
Website Chairman
Ginny Mueller (314) 831-3063 vcmueller16@hotmail.com
AKCA / Koi USA Representative
Tom Meier (636) 405-1120
Pond-O-Rama Chairman
Joan Ziskind (636) 394-6342 joan.ziskind@yahoo.com
Parliamentarian
Carol Greminger (314) 487-9119 carolnron@att.net
Historian
Betsy Meier (636) 405-1120 lidodeck@att.net
Hospitality Chairman
Tonya Summers (314) 494-9794 tonya2summers@aol.com
Past President
David Stahre (618) 623-9341 dstahre@hotmail.com
Member-at-Large
Ron Greminger (314) 487-9119 carolnron@att.net

Looking for more information about pond building, plants or fish care? Visit our website, www.slwgs.org Check out our “Articles of Interest” section and “Links We Like” for help.
Members’ Outing Being Planned

The board is planning a few outings for the rest of the summer to visit some of our fellow members’ ponds which are farther away.

To allow a little more planning time, please unsave the July 13 date. Details will be included in the July newsletter along with email blast so make sure you have given us your email,

So you do not miss out on any news or details, after the July newsletter.

Fun Facts About Lotuses

In Asia the lotus is used for many things. Lotus tubers are as important for food in Asia as potatoes are in the United States and are considered a staple. The crisp tubers are also sliced and fried and taste almost like potato chips. If you remember several years ago we had them as appetizers at one of our banquets at the Jewel box. Almost all parts of the lotus are edible. Even the immature seed pods, flower petals, and stamen are used as garnish or in tea. Stems and young leaves are eaten cooked or raw. The seeds can be eaten raw, pickled, candied, or cooked. The seeds are used make flour or roasted to make puffed “makhanas” (like popcorn).

Frogs exhibit a natural affinity for lotus. They can be found perched somewhere on the plant and bring joy and surprise to pond owners. Koi have been the root cause of the demise of many waterlilies over the history of ornamental ponds. Their persistent foraging, grazing, and digging in and around the soil of the waterlily roots have made many pond owners throw in the towel. Lotus on the other hand, are an alternative for koi owners that want lush, dense growth and colorful flowers in the koi pond. Lotus planting containers can be placed in shallow margins around the pond or on constructed pedestals in the center of the pond with the top of the container just beneath the water surface so the koi don’t have access to the root systems. As an added deterrent, koi don’t like the prickly stems of the lotus.
The SLWGS library books are now available by request. Over the last several years, only 10 books were borrowed from the table at the members meetings. Many people are using the Internet as a resource. We do have a very nice selection of books for those who like information on the printed page. A complete list is on the SLWGS.org website. Go to the membership page and click on Lending Library. If you are interested in borrowing a book, contact me and I will be glad to bring it to you at the next meeting.

Betsy Meier
SLWGS Librarian
Lidodeck@att.net
My Hobbies

Just as a long journey begins with the first step, this project started with measuring and squaring up for the footing. Thank goodness the internet exists as it was my “go to” for the “how to” part of the work. I had to dig the foundation down to the frost line, pour the concrete and then lay the block all done with shovel, pick, wheelbarrow and hoe. I really don’t remember how many 60 lb. bags of concrete I hand mixed but I do recall there were at least two full pallets. I will admit laying the block was fun and both the foundation and brick work came out square, level and to the correct dimensions for the treated timbers that would tie the foundation to the greenhouse.

Before enclosing one end of the foundation with the block, I had to dig the retaining pool and pour a concrete base to support the natural stone waterfall. By the time I had finished the rock foundation, I truly had a connection with the fundamentals of ancient Egyptian technology. Single-handedly lifting and sitting into place 3,600 pounds of stone is no easy task. Nothing put the incline plan and lever action. Finished with this part of the project, I could complete the brick work and plumb for the waterfall. Once the greenhouse wall was installed I would no longer be able to access the back of the waterfall and its plumbing without taking out a polycarbonate panel.

Having suffered through greenhouse number one, I now had a better understanding of how to assemble this one. Things went much faster with fewer problems. Practice does make perfect! At this point it’s down to installing electric wire for the lights, pumps, outlets and eventually putting in the propane heater.

I realized that since the plants were going to be tropical, they would need a good rain shower each day. I installed a rainfall system overhead for the plants on a timer to deliver a good 10 minute rainfall precisely at 10:00 each morning. Plants were selected and put into place on either side of a stone path down the middle of the greenhouse to the waterfall.

To say the least, the plants exploded in growth. Early last summer I had planted a red passion flower vine that literally grew the entire length of the greenhouse and finally escaped out an overhead vent. The vine produced hundreds of bright red flowers the entire summer both inside and outside of the greenhouse.

I won’t list the various plant species I planted but I will tell you that by the end of summer I literally had to cut back the growth to walk from one end to the other.

Realizing fall and winter would eventually return to St. Louis, I decided on 45,000 BTU propane heaters to heat the greenhouse. Although the install went without too much trouble, I didn’t have many days to wait before having to fire it up. So far, I have no complaints with the heating but I did install a system that if the temperature drops below 60 degree a red light indicator automatically comes on. I also have a wireless sensor in both houses to text me with temperature and humidity updates every 30 minutes.

Hobbies can sometimes control one’s life. Perhaps you can now understand my predicament. Can one actually take a vacation when you have two greenhouses, livestock to feed, three dogs and two parrots and not worry every minute you’re gone?

YES! By the time you have read this, I will have traveled by train to New Orleans and back. Somehow a few additional orchids accompanied me on the return trip!

Article by Robert Henson
Last Chance to Pickup Members’ Pond-O-Rama Tickets

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Photo of the Month
A flower that was recently planted at the Jewel Box.