Barry Ritter is owner of Ritter Perennials, a locally grown source of perennials and native flowers. The Ritter family has been in the horticultural industry for nearly 100 years. The family started growing vegetables and flowers in the early 1920's. Over the years, the family expanded into growing annuals, perennials, holiday crops, and house plants.

Twenty-five years ago, Barry, third generation grower, carried on the tradition and started his own business, Ritter Perennials. Barry is one of the premier perennial growers in the Midwest. Many of the local independent garden centers stock Ritter Perennials. When not in the greenhouse, he travels the country to find new and unique varieties of perennials that will grow well in the extreme weather conditions of the Midwest. Some of the types he has introduced are Musa Banjoo—the hardy banana tree, begonia grandis, and many heucheras.

Barry will inspire us with ideas on how to enhance the beauty of our ponds with plants, trees, and shrubs. He will show, through a powerpoint presentation and photographs, how the combination of strategic night-time lighting and perennials can change the visual impact of our ponds.

I'm head over heels in love with water gardening!
Perennials For Around Your Water Feature

Adding perennials around your water feature can enhance the beauty and tranquility of your garden. However, not all perennials are suited for growing in a moist environment. Below are some of the best perennials to consider planting around your water feature:

1. Astilbe - Astilbe is a stunning flowering perennial that thrives in moist soil. It produces fluffy plumes of flowers in shades of pink, red, and white that stand out against the green foliage. Astilbe prefers partial to full shade and can be grown around the edges of your water feature.

2. Iris - Iris is another water-loving perennial that adds vibrant color to your garden. It produces striking flowers in various colors, including blue, purple, yellow, and white. Iris prefers full sun and moist soil, making it ideal for planting near the water feature's edge.

3. Lobelia - Lobelia is a water-loving perennial that produces showy spikes of bright blue, purple, or white flowers. It prefers partial shade and moist soil and can be grown around the edges of your water feature or in a bog garden.

4. Hosta - Hostas are a popular perennial that are known for their attractive foliage. They produce large, lush leaves in a range of colors, including green, blue, and variegated. Hostas prefer partial to full shade and moist soil, making them an excellent choice for planting around your water feature.

5. Primrose - Primrose is a beautiful flowering perennial that produces clusters of fragrant flowers in shades of pink, purple, and white. It prefers partial shade and moist soil and can be grown around the edges of your water feature or in a bog garden.

When selecting perennials to plant around your water feature, it’s essential to consider their water requirement. The above-listed perennials are some of the best choices for a moist environment and will add beauty and color to your water feature.
A word from the Editor

I think spring has sprung. This winter was not too bad. I did miss having a nice snow fall though. I’m just itching to get out and start cleaning out the beds but I know it is still too early to do that. We have had a hard freeze in April before.

Just wanted to remind everyone as you start planting or cleaning out stuff keep in mind that the SLWGS Auction will be in July again this year. Our president, Bob Henson, said at the last general meeting that he will have quite a few of his orchids in the auction this year. Last year we had everything from preformed ponds to home made table runners and bird houses. So don’t miss the auction this year. You may find a hidden treasure.

Last month we had Mr. Prather from Wild Birds Unlimited and Wild Bird Rehabilitation speak. It was quite an interesting talk. Too bad if you missed it! Don’t miss this months speaker, Barry Ritter, talking about perennials and night time lighting.

Enjoy spring’s introduction and the opportunity to get back into out gardens!

Help Wanted

Webster Groves Garden Club is looking for help. They are having their annual plant sale at the end of April. They have good procedures and have leaders for all their tasks but are looking for some additional hands to dig or pot, mark plants and work at their sale.

If interested, please call Dorothy Lockard (314) 369-7528 to help.
St. Louis Water Garden Society Calendar of Events 2023

Membership meetings in 2023 will be held on the dates and at the locations listed below between 7 and 9 p.m. Meetings will be held on Tuesdays at the Kirkwood Community Center, Room 200 A/B. There is an elevator.


April 18th—The Art of Ikebana by Rita Zeitz. She will be demonstrating the art of Japanese floral arranging.

November — Budget—Election of President and Secretary

**** Meeting Location ****

Kirkwood Community Center
Rm# 200 A/B
111 S Geyer Rd
Kirkwood, MO 63122
Thank you to all Twenty-Three members who will welcome visitors to their beautiful water features this year. (Host applications are now closed.) We are thrilled to have so many returning and new retail partners, many of whom are also advertisers, who will be selling our tickets in their stores. SLWGS members receive one ticket to Pond-O-Rama included with their membership. Now is a great time to renew!

**Marketing Updates**

**Pond Tour 2023 Promotions**

**Poster** – This year’s Pond-O-Rama poster has a new look and QR Code. What is that QR code? QR stands for “Quick Response.” The code is a unique design that will enable you to link directly to a website when scanned by your smartphone. In our case, it takes you to, the Pond-O-Rama page.

**To scan a QR code:**
1. Open the camera app on your phone
2. Center the QR code on your phone screen (You may need to move the phone closer or further from the code)
3. Tap the link that pops up
4. Pat yourself on the back for being so tech-savvy!

**Brochures**- have been redesigned to attract more interest in our Society and the tour itself. Ticket seller information and locations are all still included.

**SLWGS.org** – The site is gradually being updated – in design, content, and function. There is quite a lot to do, so please be patient. If you want ownership of a section of the website, please contact Ginny Mueller to be added to upcoming training sessions. If you find any errors or broken links, please let us know at info@slwgs.org. Thank you!

**Social Media** – Are you following the St. Louis Water Garden Society on FACEBOOK and INSTAGRAM? Online, nothing draws a crowd like a crowd. Whenever you “Like,” comment, or share content from one of our accounts, you promote SLWGS to new audiences. So do it! Social media is a cost-effective way to share information and grow our membership.
Water Word is usually 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:

2023 SLWGS Officers

President
Bob Henson  (314) 495-4233  hatt8v92@aol.com
Vice President
Greg Heck  (314) 302-0273  taraxacum44@gmail.com
Treasurer
Jerre Baynes  (314) 775-5453  baynes_j@swbell.net
Recording Secretary
Sophia Cluck  (636) 530-1726  rodie0415@gmail.com

2023 Board Members

Publicity Chairman
Ginny Mueller  (314) 808-7000  vcmueller16@gmail.com
Special Events Chair
Laurel Walle  (314) 898-7216  lollysnorks@gmail.com
Kathie Soehngen  (314) 894-0981  kasoehng@swbell.net
Society Shirt Sales Chairman
Gail Abernathy  (314) 427-7076
Membership/E-mail Chairman
Gail Abernathy  (314) 427-7076
Jewel Box Chairman
Kay Miskell  (618) 344-6216  km99@att.net
Water Word Editor
Gail Abernathy  (314) 427-7076
Website Chairman
Ginny Mueller  (314) 808-7000  vcmueller16@gmail.com
Pond-O-Rama Chairman
Ginny Mueller  (314) 808-7000  vcmueller16@gmail.com
Parliamentarian
Carol Greminger  (314) 487-9119  carolinnron@att.net
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Hospitality Chairman
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Keith Haus  (314) 993-0985  keithhaus33@gmail.com
Jim Haegele  (636) 349-5511  jimhaegele@gmail.com

Find resources at www.slwgs.org!
Last Chance to Renew!

Membership chairman Gail Abernathy has reminded us that our membership renewals were due in January. She at the March meeting to accept your dues payment, which remains $15 per person. If your membership information needs updating, you can use the brief form at the right, or download the membership form from our website, www.slwgs.org. While guests always are welcome at our meetings, there are definite benefits to membership. For one thing, all members receive one free Pond-O-Rama ticket, a $20 value. In addition, all members receive the regular issues of Water Word, and may participate in a number of special events throughout the year, including tours and field trips arranged for members only, plant swaps and access to our online discussion group.

SLWGS member volunteers get hands-on experience in planting and maintaining a water garden that includes a wide variety of exotic water plants by working at the Jewel Box pools in Forest Park.

So bring your checkbooks and stop at the membership table to make sure you remain a member.

Members’ Corner:

March Birthday’s
Ann Lena 3/4
Tom Meier 3/7
Karen M Zimmermann 3/7
Bruce Feldman 3/12
Bob Henson 3/15
Rhonda Porter 3/20
Laurel Walle 3/22

International Waterlily & Water Gardening Society

Here is the link to their site and the login information. www.iwgs.org

Login: SLWGS
Password: slwgs20

Return this form with your $15 check payable to the St. Louis Water Gardening Society address on top left of page 10!

Please Print or Type Clearly

Name(s) ______________________________________

Include Spouse______________________________________

Alternate Name (Company or Organization)

Address

City__________________________ State ______ZIP_______

Phone_________________________________________

E-mail

E-mail

[ ] New Membership [ ] Annual renewal
(Renewals are due annually in January)

Would you prefer to receive your copies of Water Word:
via e-mail only? Or by regular mail? Circle one
Photographing Your Pond at Night

1. Use a tripod: A tripod is essential for night photography, as it keeps the camera steady and prevents blur. If you don't have a tripod, you can use a stable surface like a table or ledge to rest your camera on.

2. Use a low ISO: Using a low ISO will help reduce the amount of digital noise in your photos. This is especially important for night photography, where there is less light.

3. Use a wide aperture: A wide aperture (low f-number) will let in more light, allowing you to capture brighter, more detailed images.

4. Use a slow shutter speed: A slow shutter speed will allow more light to enter the camera and create a more prolonged exposure. This will give the water a silky, smooth look.

5. Experiment with different angles: Try different angles to find the best composition for your photo. You might try shooting from above, from the side, or a low angle.

6. Use a remote or self-timer: To prevent camera shake, use a remote or self-timer to trigger the camera's shutter. This will prevent any accidental movement while taking the shot.

7. Shoot in RAW format: If your camera or phone allows it, shoot in RAW format. This will give you more control over the final image during post-processing.

8. Avoid using flash: Using a flash can be harsh and unnatural and may wash out the colors in your photo. Instead, try using a low-powered flashlight or a light painting technique to add light to your scene.

By following these tips, you should be able to capture stunning night photography around your water feature.
Light up your Pond!

Pond lighting requires an eye for detail. Unlike a lightbulb inside your home, you can’t create a fully lit feature using light on a pond. You must be smart about where you place the lighting elements and how you use them to make the most pleasant effects. However, before we go into detail, you must understand the most common pond lighting mistakes and how to avoid them.

The position of the light is crucial for a pleasing effect. You want to consider how your pond lighting will affect your everyday life. Indeed, if the light interferes with your indoor activities, it can be problematic. For instance, check that your pond lights don’t create a glare not only around the pond but also inside your home or that of your neighbors. Poorly directed powerful lighting can be disturbing for those who are around.

Every pond is different. If your pond shelters a wildlife ecosystem, it is fair to say that you need to consider how your pond lighting will affect aquatic creatures. Additionally, a wildlife-friendly pond tends to have murky water, which will not look pleasant at night. You can use subtle lighting to highlight some features around the pond and cast an elegant shadow on the murky water. If, on the other hand, your pond is not intended to be a boggy environment, you will need to improve water clarity to make the most of your pond lighting.

Mosquitos are also a factor to consider when choosing the best lighting options. Indeed, bugs love lights. If your pond lighting attracts too many insects near your home or patio, the effect will be unpleasant.

Finally, pond lighting enhances some of the pond’s features or the surrounding area. If you use too much light, you will distract from the charm of your pond. You must find the right balance between highlighting some elements and leaving others in the shadows.

Events Around Town

**April 14-16**— **Home Show**, St Charles Convention Center

**May 14**— **Iris Show**, Missouri Botanical Garden

**May 2–October 15**— **Chihuly in the Garden**, Missouri Botanical Garden
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This hummingbird mint plant is a perennial with charming bicolored flowery fiery orange spikes and a hint of blue. Tango Agastache and other hummingbird mint plants attract pollinators to your gardens, like hummingbirds, butterflies, and honeybees. In addition to attracting pollinators, it is deer-resistant. The tango hummingbird mint plant is drought-tolerant, easy to grow in any garden soil, and is one of the many perennials you could put in your beautiful garden.