



Genesee Valley Pond & Koi Club Newsletter

Volume 11 Issue 12

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Jardin botanique de Montréal - Montreal Botanical Garden



Tower of Condensing Clouds in Chinese Garden



Japanese Garden



The Pavilion of Infinite Pleasantness



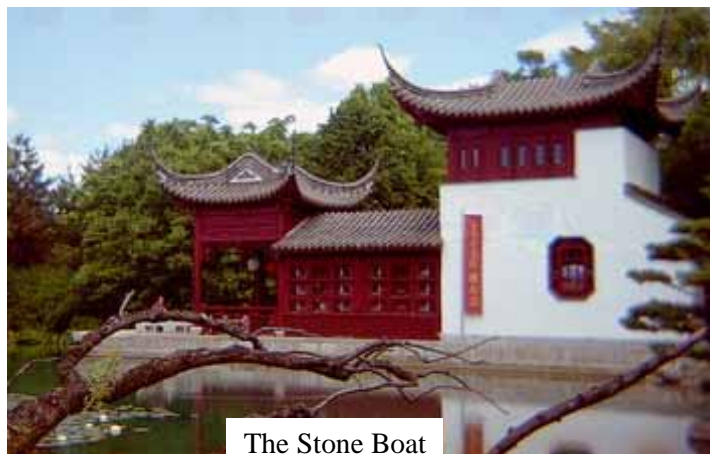
The Montreal Botanical Garden was founded in 1931. Covering 185 acres, it is second only in size to Kew Gardens in London.

The Chinese Garden is constructed along the traditional lines for a Chinese garden. It has many winding paths, an artificial mountain, and a collection of bonsai. It is the largest Chinese garden in the world outside China.

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Dream Lake Garden



The Stone Boat

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"Wet -n- Dry" "News -n- Views"

Last Month

Thanks to Larry and Nathan Nau, we had a beautiful photo tour of Thailand and their insights into the culture and customs of this exotic country. The presentation was similarly based, in part, on their participation in the IWGS Symposium and partially on Larry's background work in assembling the certified waterlily and lotus collection for the King Rama IX Park.

It was evident from the very first photos that Thailand is definitely a country of flowers. Many of the roadways were lined with mass plantings of yellow and red Canna lilies. In other areas, Lotus filled almost every waterway. Where sufficient water may have been lacking, these plantings were mixed and interspersed with large stone pots filled with waterlilies, lotus or other aquatic plants.

Nearly all houses and businesses had water features and plants as part of their landscapes or entrance gardens. The buses and many other vehicles were colorfully decorated with flower themes.

We saw some of the commercial grower and breeder operations. It was obvious from the size of these, that their love and respect for these plants, is putting them in the forefront of new developments as well as becoming a prime source for world export trade.

Lotus are grown commercially for the market as a source of cut flowers, food (seeds and tubers) and the buds. The buds are primarily given as an offering to Buddha in the temples. According to tradition, "the Lotus is a holy flower symbolizing our struggle in the world. It rises from the mud, grows toward the light and finally, opens its petals to reveal its full beauty" and structure.

Nathan explained the visits that they made to the monkey and elephant training facilities. He did get to work with some of these animals and was even the prime participant in an elephant demonstration. He agreed to lay on the ground and one of elephants placed its foot on his chest. He enjoyed that experience, but was eager to leave the arena as soon as it was over.

Another significant plant is the 'Golden Shower' tree *Cassia fistula* which is the national flower of Thailand. Since the blossoms are yellow, which is the color for the King and for Buddhism, it is held in equally high regard. The unique feature of this tree is that they all bloom at the same time. "This unity of flowering is felt to reflect the unity and identity of the Thais."

There were also photos of some of the various temple complexes. They all had masses of gold decorations on the stupas, pagodas and pillars. Many of them were also decorated with intricate mosaics. This religious theme carried over with views of some of the temple Buddhas as well as views of some of the Buddha shops and displays for home shrines and garden displays.

All in all, it was a very interesting tour of the various parts of the country and a few of the cities and villages. This brief review can do little but scratch the surface of the presentation and the country. It might, however, lead you to understand why Bangkok is becoming known as the "Venice of the East" and is further noted for its botanical and public gardens.

If you think that you might be interested in seeing the new waterlily and other water plant competitions, tour various gardens and attend the educational presentations by internationally known experts of an IWGS Symposium, you will have the opportunity to do so and a little closer to home. The 2008 Symposium will be in the Richmond, Virginia area. This could be combined with a visit to the

scenic Shenandoah Valley for a beautiful mid-summer vacation. The dates will be July 17-22, 2008. We will provide updates as they become available, but at least you now have sufficient information to start considering this as an option for your summer plans.

We were able to elect or in most cases re-affirm the Officers and Board Members for the 2008 year. The only notable change is the election of Les Saiers as the sole treasurer rather than the dual position that was in place as Les was becoming familiar with the position and duties. I want to thank John Roguski for his support and fine job as treasurer for the past 4 years. Not only did he handle that job very well, he also helped by doing several presentations for us.

We thank all of you for your vote of confidence in us and our efforts to provide interesting and timely topics for the meetings and newsletters. However, we would appreciate any suggestions that you might have especially for new and interesting topics, types of speakers or off-site tours or visits. We need this information before the end of the year, so that we can start to recruit speakers and to make the necessary time and contact arrangements before the speaker schedules become filled with other commitments or prior to their businesses entering into the peak season.

If you could submit your suggestions by the first of January, that would give us an opportunity to try to fit them into the calendar at the Board planning meeting in January. We thank you in advance for your advice and suggestions. We look forward to your continued participation.

For those who might be curious, the raffle of the "Thermoplant" donated by Mark Prescott of Black River Nursery was won by Bob Wheeler. Bob hopes to try it either over the winter or to jump start a planting in spring. Hopefully, Bob

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will report back to us and to Mark with the results of this trial.

This Month

December 7th is the date for our Christmas Party and year end celebration. This will feature our usual format of members providing a dish to pass and the club will provide the meat dish, paper products, utensils, punch and coffee. We will start the social gathering at 6:30 followed by dinner at about 7:00 PM. The entertainment will be in the form of our Pond Jeopardy game which reviews some of the information that was presented during the year.

The tentative guideline for the dish to pass portion of the Christmas Party is based on the first letter of your family name is: A-H provide a salad or side dish type; I-P provide an appetizer dish; and Q-Z are the desserts. If you have a special dish that you would prefer to make rather than work according to the suggested guidelines, Please call Yvonne Wheeler at 461-5315 or Kathy Hursh at 473-6276. This is necessary to keep the various types of dishes and choices in balance. Likewise, we may have to change some of the options based on the responses within a given alphabet grouping to keep the varieties in proportion.

If you will be attending, Please call Yvonne Wheeler at 461-5315 or Kathy Hursh at 473-6276 by Monday, December 3.

December is also the kick-off month for club membership renewals. For your convenience, we have included a short-form renewal blank. We hope that you have enjoyed our events this year and that you will renew early to help us better plan for next year's events.

Coming events

There will be no GVPAKC meeting in the month of January. The board members will try to meet early in the month to set tentative

dates and topic areas for the year.

The first meeting for the 2008 year will be Friday, February 1st. We hope to have a tentative calendar of events and possible meeting topics for listing in the February newsletter and possible discussion at that meeting.

A Thought For Surviving Winter

I want to thank Nancy and Dave Parrone for the loan of their copy of the book, *Secrets of Disney's Glorious Gardens* by Kevin Markey. As you might expect, the book is amply illustrated with wonderful photos and views of the gardens and plant materials. Gardens and plant materials are used extensively throughout the parks. Some of the gardens are so well noted that they are destinations and attractions within their own right.

It also has behind the scenes photos from some of the greenhouses where the plants are started and some of the people who share the responsibility of preparing, installing and maintaining the many new plants that are required to produce the displays and keep them in peak viewing condition. There are 650 professional horticulturists who work at Disneyland and Walt Disney World.

The real surprise, for me, was the inclusion and presentation of various DIY construction projects that you could use to enhance some aspects of the displays in your own gardens. There are plans for an entry arbor, a floating garden (a variation of the floating island concept), hanging basket gardens and various types of topiary gardens. The floating garden project is one that I hope to share with you early in the year in case it is something that you might want to work on during our slower (?) winter months.

It also has some great landscaping suggestions, plant selections for various types of gardens and choosing ornamental accents. They even

share this recipe for a Walt Disney World Soil Mix. Mixture: 50% peat moss; 10% green bark chips (implied elsewhere to be a mix of pine bark and regular wood chips); 40% sand. This produces a nutrient rich mixture that holds moisture yet drains well. The bark chips foster and support the growth of plant friendly microbes.

All in all, it is a great though small book (less than 150 pages) that could provide some great views on dark, dreary winter day. With luck, you may find a copy in one of the local library systems. It would be worth the effort and surely be something that you would enjoy.

Salt -- User and Buyer Beware

We have all probably used salt in a "hospital" tank to treat sick, injured or fish recovering from infection. We may have used it in quarantine tanks as we prepare new fish for release into our ponds. Some may have added it periodically to their regular pond while others use it as a standard practice. With a smaller pond, food grade salt is readily available without additives and not too unreasonably priced. However, owners of large ponds who use salt on a regular basis try to obtain an even better price by buying in bulk. This can lead to unexpected complications because there are many more options based on different manufacturers, type of salt, intended end use, incomplete point of sale and package information. These problems were highlighted in an article in KOI USA by Nancy Moore bearing a similar title.

The author starts by saying that she always made sure that she did not purchase salt with iodine, rust inhibitors or anti-caking agents nor would she use water that had been through a water-softener. She would further check with the seller about the safety of using the particular salt in a Koi pond. She thought that with this procedure in place she was being careful enough.

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Unfortunately, when some of her fish became ill and started dying as she was treating them and increasing the salt levels, even within safe guidelines to help them recover, she realized that something was drastically wrong. Her struggle is summarized below, but her feelings about her efforts to learn a lot more about “salt--the wonder drug” left her with fears that others may be using the wrong salt in their Koi ponds just as she was.

Since the visual symptoms that her Koi were exhibiting were similar to those of KHV, the fish were tested for this. It was only after they were all determined to be free and clear of KHV that water quality tests were performed. This is when the first evidence of high potassium levels were noted. Her quarantine tank, the worst offender as far as fish deaths were concerned, showed a potassium level of 66 ppm.. She subsequently learned from Dr. Nick Saint-Erne, who authored the book *Advanced Koi Care*, that even 6 ppm. of potassium chloride is toxic to Koi. According to Dr. Sain-Erne the excess of potassium will affect heart rhythm, can lead to bradycardia (slow heart action) and even heart failure.

After some additional, more detailed testing and working with several fish friendly veterinarians, she found out that the salt that she had been using since 2006 was not suitable for use with fresh water fish and in reality was gradually poisoning them.

When we talk about salt, we are normally talking about refined Sodium Chloride. Salt, as mined or collected, sometimes has other minerals in it or when processed may have other additives added to it that may be harmful to your fish. The sad part is that these other ingredients or additives that might be in the bag, are not always listed on the bag. You should try to check the ingredients in the salt that you are currently using and definitely check them whenever you purchase a new supply. The best way to do that is by looking at the manufac-

turers technical data sheet for the particular brand, type and grade of salt that you might buy.

It is crucial that the salt that you use does not contain potassium, especially potassium chloride, that is also another salt. The build up of potassium levels in Nancy’s treatment tank and pond is what was responsible for the stress and in several cases the deaths of her fish. Neither of the bags showed that potassium chloride and/or Yellow Prussiate of Soda (YPS), that can be harmful to fresh water fish, were listed as ingredients, yet they were both present.

Tom Ellis of United Salt Company that produced the salts that Nancy used agreed that they were not safe for fresh water fish. Furthermore, he stated that only two out of the many types of salt that they produce are suitable for Koi ponds and that they are not distributed throughout the country. The Agricultural Salt contains mineral additives that are great for cattle and sheep, but not fish.

United Salt Company is not alone in this dilemma. Both the Cargill and the Morton Salt Companies indicated that they also only have two products each that would be safe to use in Koi ponds.

In addition, Dr Saint-Erne confirmed the suggestions of Tom Ellis that sea salt is not a good choice for treating fresh water fish either. Sea salt contains many trace minerals that can be tolerated by marine life, but they could become toxic in fresh water situations.

Now comes the hard part. It is difficult to find a test kit for the hobbyist to use. One of the easier ones to use only measures down to 6 ppm. which, as previously mentioned, is the point where the potassium level is already becoming toxic. The other kits are more accurate, but must be used in conjunction with precision electronic equipment. The final option is to take a water sample to a professional lab for a potassium or other metals analysis.

The best route, if you are a salt user, is to use extra caution and dou-

ble check the tech data sheets before you make a new purchase to be sure that you are getting pure salt. This should be done before each purchase to verify that the manufacturer hasn’t modified the process or product. The web-site for the salt manufacturer should have the latest information posted. Then, monitor your fish for any signs of stress after each addition of salt or adjustment in salt concentration or make up level.

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The Japanese Garden is populated with Japanese plants, and contains an exhibit on tea. It also includes a large koi pond; visitors often feed the koi. The Montreal Botanical Garden 4101, rue Sherbrooke Est Montréal, Québec Canada, H1X 2B2 <http://www2.ville.montreal.qc.ca/jardin/en/menu.htm>

NOTE!! The **club website** has a **new address**. Genesee Gateway has hosted our web site until now. But it has upgraded its servers and will now only support web sites that have their own domain names. Having our own domain name may allow us to take advantage of new services that we have not had in the past.

Visit the GVPKAC website at its new address:
<http://www.gvpakc.org>



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Board Members 2007

President: Larry Hursh
Vice President: Bob Wheeler
Secretary: Kathy Hursh
Treasurer: John Roguski/Les Saiers
Pond Tour Chairperson: Norm James/Les Saiers
Refreshments: Yvonne Wheeler and Kathy Hursh
Newsletter Editors: Hursh, James, and Nau families
Webmaster: Norm James - gvpakc@attglobal.net

Purpose of the Club

- To promote, create and enlarge the hobby of keeping, breeding, appreciating and exhibiting Koi and goldfish.
- To promote and appreciate the hobby of Water Gardening.
- To disseminate information about Koi, goldfish and Water Gardening.
- To socialize and have fun.

We meet in a very friendly atmosphere at 7:00 pm, the first Friday of every month, at the Rochester Civic Garden Center (the Castle), 5 Castle Park, off Reservoir Ave., in Highland Park. Parking is free. Anyone interested in water gardening and/or Koi is welcome to join us. We ask that you consider joining the club after your third visit. For more information call Larry H. (585) 473-6276 or e-mail lkhursh@aol.com or visit the club website at <http://www.gvpakc.org>

Calendar of Events

December 7, 2007: This will be our Christmas party and year end celebration of another successful year. We will also present a review of this year's information in our version of pond jeopardy game. The party will consist of members bringing a dish to pass. The suggested guideline for the dish to pass portion based on your family name are: A-H salads or side types; I-P appetizers; Q-Z desserts.

December 14, 2007: NFKPC

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

January 4, 2008: There will be no meeting this month.

February 1, 2008: Our first meeting of the year. Topic and presenter will be announced in a future newsletter.

"Naturally Green" - A live gardening show every Saturday from **9-10 am** on **WYSL 1040 AM**.