

# March Newsletter

Hello friends!

It's hard to believe another pond season is nearly here! After what has felt like a long, cold, snowy winter, we have warmer and sunnier days ahead. And with that comes another pond club season. We look forward to getting together with you soon.

Our first meeting will be on April 25. It will be at Red Butte Garden, 300 Wakara Way in Salt Lake City. The Garden will be open for us at 6:00 pm, and Rosie Cobbley will be available to conduct informal tours of the daffodils. The meeting will begin at 7:00 pm. Julie Matis Flint will give a presentation on growing water lilies. Please come out and join us. This is a great time to renew old friendships and make new friends. You'll find a schedule of meetings for the year on page 3.

With spring around the corner, our fish and plants finally are beginning to awaken. That means it's time to start thinking about spring maintenance on your ponds and water features. Take a look at some suggestions on pages 2 - 3 .

You may have noticed that we've rebranded! We believe the club's new name – Utah Pond and Garden Club – better describes the Club and the broad interests of our members. Please let us know what you think.

We hope you enjoy our monthly newsletters. Please contribute; we need you to share your knowledge and experience. And let us know if there is a particular plant, fish or other topic you'd like us to address in the newsletter or in a monthly meeting. Also , let us know if you'd like to help with a monthly meeting or be in this summer's pond tour! Our contact info is on page 9.



### In this Issue

Getting your pond ready .....	2
2024 Meeting Schedule .....	3
Dragonflies & Mosquitoes ...	4
Pond Vacuums .....	6
Our Sponsors .....	7
About Us.....	9





# Spring is almost here!

## *Twelve steps to getting your pond ready*

Once the snow has disappeared, the ice melted in your pond, and the temperatures have been consistently above 40°F for a week or more, it's time to open up your pond and garden pond water features for the spring. Below are 12 steps to lead you through the clean-up process.

### **Step 1.**

Rake up and dispose of leaves in the area surrounding your pond and remove. Then, remove the pond netting (which you hopefully installed in the fall to prevent leaves from falling into the pond).

### **Step 2.**

Use a skimmer net or pond vacuum (see page 6) to remove debris from the pond. A long handled brush is also helpful in removing string algae.

### **Step 3.**

Clean up your water plants, cutting back dead debris and bringing pots to their proper location that were placed in deeper levels to over winter. If water plants are overgrown, spring is an excellent time to divide and repot, with the exception of early blooming plants such as irises. You will need aquatic pots, planting soil and fertilizer to repot existing plants. Begin fertilizing aquatic plants in late April or early May.

### **Step 4a.**

If your pond has minimal debris and sludge build-up, perform a 25% water change. Note: Before adding new water, be sure to add a water conditioner that will remove chlorine and chloramines from city water, detoxify heavy metals in well water, and reduce fish stress by adding essential electrolytes, replacing the fish's slime coat.

### **Step 4b.**

If your pond has significant sludge and debris (to a depth of 1" or more) after the initial skimming and vacuuming, you may want to perform a more complete water change.

Prior to performing a complete water change, set up a temporary tank for your fish using water from the pond's surface (do not pull water from the sludge-laden bottom that may contain significant toxic gases). Add an aerator or pump to the tank to add oxygen to the water. The tank should be set in the shade and covered to prevent the fish from jumping out and predators from getting in. Do not feed the fish while they are in the temporary tank. Prior to returning the fish to the newly cleaned pond, add a water

conditioner to remove chlorine, chloramines and heavy metals. Also, if the temperature of the new pond water is more than 2°F different than that of temporary tank, the fish should be placed in plastic bags with water from the temporary tank and floated in the pond for 10 to 30 minutes prior to release. The floating time will vary based on the temperature difference: if the difference is 5°F or more, replace 25% of the water in the bag with pond water every 10 minutes until the temperature of the bag water is within 2°F of the pond water. When releasing the fish into the pond, carefully net the fish out of the bag and dispose of the bag water on the ground.

When cleaning the sludge from the pond bottom, a pond or wet/dry vacuum can be very helpful. (See page 6.) Be sure to set the vacuum outside the pond for easy emptying.

### **Step 5.**

Reconnect your pump and filter. If the filter or skimmer pads were not cleaned in the fall, they should be rinsed prior to restarting your pump. Do not over clean your filter pads or use any form of soap, or bleach on the pads. If pads are badly worn or torn they should be replaced.

### **Step 6.**

Test your water quality using an at home pond test kit. The Ammonia and Nitrites levels should read zero. If higher than zero, an additional 25% water change should be done until the levels are reduced. pH should be between 6.5 & 8.5. If the pH is outside this range, add pH Up or pH Down and pH Buffer according to the directions on the container. If you have fish in your pond, the salinity should be between .1% and .25%. To achieve a salinity of .1% (assuming your current salinity is 0%) add 1 pound of pond salt per hundred gallons of water. Pond salt is 100% pure salt, contains no additives and is in large crystal form for slow release.

### **Step 7.**

Add a spring cold water cleaning bacteria to breakdown remaining sludge and a start-up Bacteria to re-colonize beneficial bacteria in your bio-filter.

### **Step 8.**

If you have an ultraviolet (UV) light clarifier or sterilizer to prevent green water, replace the bulb and clean the quartz sleeve that covers the bulb. However, do not turn the UV unit on until the bacteria have had 48 hours to

colonize.

### Step 9.

Prepare for **The Return of the Heron** by placing fishing line around the edge of your pond, netting the pond, installing a koi castle to provide a safe area in the pond for fish to hide or installing a motion detection device (such as a ScareCrow) to scare away predators.

### Step 10.

You can begin feeding your fish when water temperatures remain at 50°F or higher. Use a pond thermometer to test the water's temperature. From 50°F to 65°F, feed fish once weekly, and at 65°F and above, feed fish every other day with a spring fish food that is wheat-germ based and contains vitamin C and immune stimulants for optimum fish health, or a higher end koi food that has additional additives such as: high levels of spirulina and montmarillonite clay for color enhancement, beta glucan that stimulates immune systems to prevent disease and infections and added vitamin C.

### Step 11.

To keep your pond clear and healthy, and to break down sludge and debris throughout the season, add an all season beneficial bacteria on a regular basis; and once the water temperatures are consistently 60°F or higher, begin adding a sludge remover which is available in a liquid, granular or pellet form. If your pond has green or brown water a water clarifier to quickly clear up murky water caused by floating organic and inorganic particles by pulling these floating particles together and settling them to the bottom. If this is an ongoing problem look at adding an ultraviolet Light.

### Step 12.

Enjoy the beauty and tranquility your pond brings you each day!

*Adapted from The Pond Place of Michigan*

## 2024 Meeting Schedule

Note that we're moving some of our meetings this year to the fourth Thursday of the month

◆ **April 25** – Red Butte Garden, 300 Wakara Way in Salt Lake City; daffodil tours at 6:00 pm and meeting at 7:00 pm with a presentation on growing water lilies

◆ **May 22** – Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District's Water Conservation Garden Park, 8275 South 1300 West in West Jordan; meeting at 7:00 pm with a presentation by Cindy Bee on water use and conservation

◆ **June 27** – Pfafflins' pond

◆ **July 18** – Saville's pond

◆ **August 22** – Annual BBQ and Plant Exchange at the Cobbleys' pond

◆ **September 26** – Julie Myer's pond

◆ **October Banquet** – date and location to be announced

## 2024 Pond Tour

We're excited for our 2024 Pond Tour, which will be on August 3rd & 4th. If you'd like your pond or water feature to be on the tour, please contact any officer (see back page for contact info). It's lots of fun!

## 2024 Membership

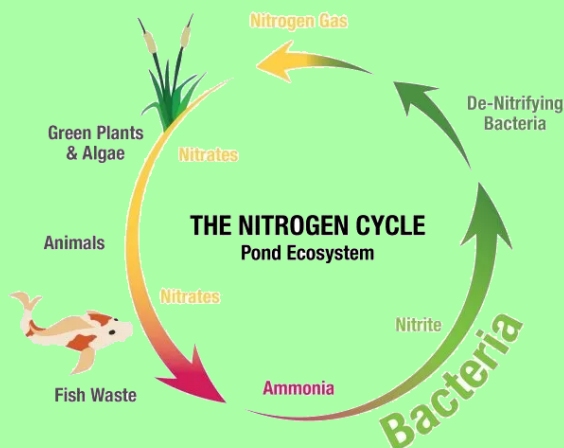
2024 dues are \$20 per person.

## Get Involved!

We'd love for each of you to get more involved in the Pond Club. We *always* need more help. Opportunities are endless, and include recruiting new members, helping coordinate the Pond Tour, assisting with monthly meetings, helping with food, helping with our website and other publicity, and much more!

### Ammonia, Nitrite and Nitrate: (The Nitrogen Cycle)

The nitrifying bacteria cause what is commonly called "The Nitrogen Cycle": All ponds, aquariums and lakes go through a nitrogen cycle. The nitrifying bacteria are integral to the cycle. During the initial stages of the cycle, Ammonia is produced by fish respiration and fish waste. In our climate, you'll need to restart the nitrogen cycle each spring,



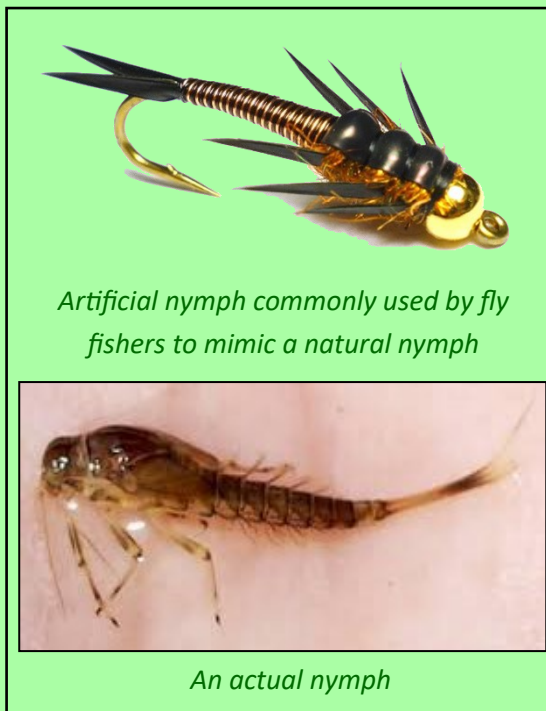


# Early Life in the Water: Dragonflies, Mosquitos, Flying Insects and Flyfishers!

Bugs are creepy and annoying, but they also have an interesting life cycle that benefits our environment and other creatures that rely on the bugs for food. People who flyfish love bugs, and are keenly aware of the life cycle of insects to help them catch fish.

Many flying insects, like dragonflies and mosquitos, spend the first part of their lives in the water before turning into flying adults. People that flyfish, like Gil and Sherry Avellar, rely on the life cycle of bugs to know what type of fly to use to catch fish.

Sometimes, it is a fly that resembles a nymph, sometimes the fish are more likely to eat the emerging insects, and sometimes they prefer fully mature bugs that land on the



*Artificial nymph commonly used by fly fishers to mimic a natural nymph*

*An actual nymph*

surface of the water to lay their eggs.

Many of the insects that live in our streams, lakes, ponds and wetlands are actually the immature stages of flying insects like dragonflies, damselflies, mayflies, midges and of course, mosquitos. These insects spend the first part of their life cycle in the water before becoming flying adults.

The length of time this aquatic stage lasts is dependent on the insect. Some dragonflies take 4-5 years to complete this part of their life cycle, while others may only be a few months. The adults usually live for weeks to months, but some dragonfly species like the Green Darner migrate

south in late September. Other insects like midges have a much shorter life cycle that is completed in a matter of weeks, culminating in a swarm of adults that may only live

## From egg to adult

Take a closer look at the journey of a dragonfly

- 1 Mating adults**  
The male dragonfly attaches his abdomen to the female's head as she curls hers under, so that he can fertilise the eggs.
- 2 Depositing the eggs**  
The female will then submerge her abdomen in water to deposit the eggs. She can lay hundreds of them in a day.
- 3 Emerging nymphs**  
After a week the nymph will emerge from the egg and remain in the water for a few months to a couple of years, surviving off other insects and small vertebrates.
- 4 Instar stages**  
The nymph will go through several instars before it reaches the metamorphosis stage. It will shed its exoskeleton each time to make room for growth.
- 5 Shedding the exoskeleton**  
Once ready the nymph will emerge from the water and attach to a nearby plant. The puffy exoskeleton will then split open.
- 6 Emerging dragonfly**  
The still-vulnerable young adult dragonfly carefully curls out of its split exoskeleton.
- 7 Drying out**  
Before flying away, the dragonfly will wait for its legs to harden and for its wings to unfurl and dry out in the Sun.

Some species of dragonfly will change colour over time

for a few days just long enough to mate and lay eggs for the next generation.

What lives in our local rivers, streams, ponds and wetlands can indicate the water quality of these bodies of water. For example, finding insects that are sensitive to pollutants, such as stonefly and dobsonfly larvae, can indicate high water quality. Generally, a diversity of life in and around a stream means that a stream has clean water and a variety of habitat.

Dragonfly larvae are sensitive to pollution as well as changes in dissolved oxygen and water temperature. Finding them can indicate that a waterway has high water quality. Nymphs are easy to spot in your backyard pond particularly in moving water, such as a waterfall feature or stream.

While we like to see a variety of organisms in and around the water, most people would prefer a world without mosquitos. Mosquitos are another kind of insect that depends on a source of water for their early stages. Like many insects, mosquito eggs can overwinter in areas that

stage for weeks or years waiting for the right conditions to hatch.



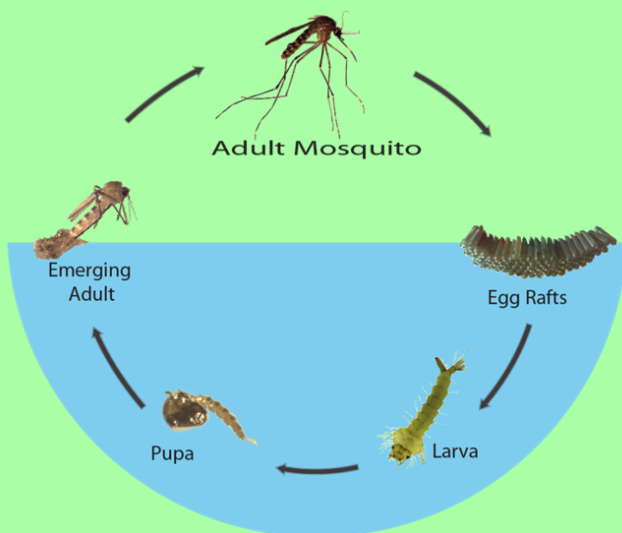
Unfortunately, mosquitos share many of the same habitats that other insects (in the water or in the air), amphibians and fish use, so spraying or treating for mosquitos with chemicals harms these creatures too. Mosquitos are everywhere, and spraying everywhere is not the answer. Below are some simple steps you can follow to protect yourself from biting mosquitos:

- Remove shallow, stagnant sources of water near your home. Check around your property for containers, such as empty pots, old tires and forgotten cups. These are attractive places for mosquitos to lay their eggs.

- When outside during dawn and dusk, wear long sleeves and pants.
- Opt for light-colored clothing. Mosquitos have poor eyesight and can see dark colors easier than light colors.
- Try a natural bug spray. Essential oils, such as lemon eucalyptus, lavender and citronella, have been shown to repel mosquitos. However, you may need to apply natural sprays more often than repellents that contain Deet.

Spraying ponds and wetlands for mosquitos indiscriminately kills mosquitos and beneficial aquatic life that we rely on for healthy ecosystems. These steps can protect you and the environment around you.

So, most bugs are great for our ponds and for our environment. Enjoy them!



are prone to get wet the next spring, like around the edges of a pond or in the vegetation along a stream.

Where they lay their eggs depends on the species. For example, the species that carries West Nile Virus tends to lay their eggs in stagnant water found in old pot bottoms, tires or other containers. Other species prefer wetlands or streams. Mosquito eggs can dry out and last in a dormant



# Pond Vacuums

## How does a pond vacuum work:

**A:** Pond vacuuming is a quick and effective way to remove muck from your backyard water garden or koi pond. When organic material such as animal waste and plant debris breaks down, it turns into a thick layer of sludge. This is called muck.

Too much muck leads to an excess of nutrients in the water. This creates an environment where algae thrive. The algae layer at the top of the water can become so thick that sunlight cannot penetrate through, killing off any aquatic plants below. Regular pond maintenance is essential for removing muck and algae.

## Why Use a Pond Vacuum?

A pond vacuum, often referred to as a pondvac, can significantly cut down on the time you spend maintaining your pond. Pondvacs quickly remove small and medium-sized debris while leaving your water feature's water level mostly unchanged. Many pond vacuums also include nozzles that are designed to prevent fish or large debris from passing through.

## Can I Use a Wet/Dry Vac for a Pond Vacuum?

One question many pond owners have is whether they can use a standard wet/dry vac in place of a pond vacuum. This is not recommended.

While a wet/dry vac can certainly handle water from your pond, it is not made for detailed work. Pondvacs are built to preserve delicate water gardens and aquatic life. A wet/dry vac, meanwhile, will suck up anything in its path, which could include your fish and your favorite flowers. Dedicated pond vacuums are much more suitable for pond maintenance.

## Do Pond Vacuums Work in Fish Ponds?

It's easy to see how any type of vacuum may pose a threat to your fish. Remember fish are cautious creatures, who tend to stay away from a foreign object such as a pond vacuum nozzle. Pondvacs are also designed with fish and aquatic life in mind.

## How to Use a Fish Pond Vacuum Cleaner

Pondvacs can be used as a part of your regular maintenance routine. Ideally, this should be done at least once per season. If your water feature is prone to collecting a lot of debris or dead leaves, you may need to vacuum more frequently.

The process for pond vacuuming may vary depending on the vacuum you use. For most pondvacs, you will first need to use a pond net to remove any large leaves or debris.

Most pondvacs have a suction hose and a discharge hose. First, lay the discharge hose facing away from the pond. It's a great idea to run the discharge hose to nearby landscape or garden beds. The excess nutrients removed from the pond are an excellent fertilizer for other plants. You can use a debris bag to catch any larger items, such as leaves.

Next, submerge the suction hose in the water and lower it to the bottom. Try and keep the vacuum itself as close to the water level as you can. Holding the vacuum too high while the suction hose is lowered can cause reduced suction.

Once the vacuum is in position, turn it on and move the suction hose in a slow and steady motion across the bottom of your water feature. Once you have finished vacuuming, use clean water to rinse out the collection chamber, tubes, and foam filters. Lastly, double-check your pond's water level and add fresh water, if necessary.

Regular use of a pond vacuum can keep your water clear and your aquatic plants and fish thriving.



Oase PondoVac 5

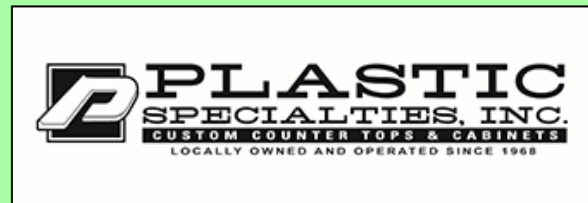
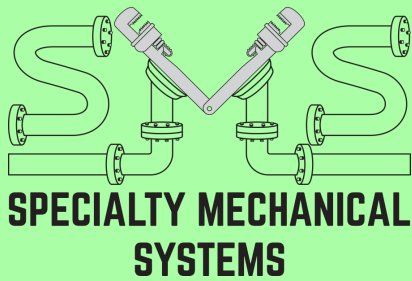


Matala Power Cyclone



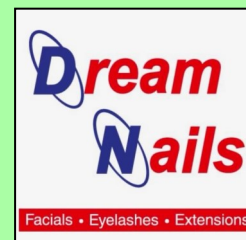
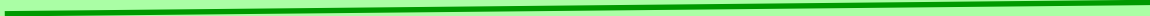
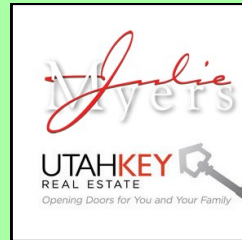
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To become a 2024 sponsor, please call  
Lewis Wayman at (801) 916-2500



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## Who we are

The Utah Pond & Garden Club is a non-profit organization serving the greater Wasatch Front. We strive to foster an appreciation for and interest in the use of water in the landscape, through monthly meetings, educational programs, pond and garden tours, and sharing our experiences. We are a group of volunteers dedicated to gardening (and especially water gardening), pond keeping, koi and other pond fish. Our members range from novices to commercial professionals.

Historically, we have sponsored an annual Water Garden Tour – a self-guided tour of outstanding local ponds, water features and gardens. Beginning with 2023, we moved to a biennial (every other year) tour. If you'd like to be involved in planning or have your yard in the **2024 tour**, please let us know! Pond tours can only happen with your participation!

Check out the club's website at [UtahPondClub.com](http://UtahPondClub.com).

## Officers

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Call Lewis Wayman at  
801-916-2500



*We need ponds for the **2024 pond tour**, and volunteers to help with meetings and other events! Please volunteer!*