

Utah Water Garden & Koi Club

March, 2019 Newsletter

February Meeting at Cactus and Tropicals



We had a well attended meeting on February 21 in spite of the cold and wind. The tropical feeling of Cactus and Tropicals was so welcome and many of us felt like spring is only a few weeks away. Our President, Richard Cobbley, started off our evening by telling us about some of the great plans we have in store for our members this year. There was a lot of enthusiasm for our new event – “Light Up the Night” evening pond tour scheduled for September 7.



Sterling provided some great information about plants that help keep our ponds clear and reduce algae blooms. Sterling is a pond expert and knows so much. Thank you Sterling for your informative talk!



We want to thank everyone who donated food and cash for our first food drive. So far our members and sponsors have donated 60 pounds of food and \$215 in cash donations! That is fantastic! We delivered these goodies to the Utah Food Bank on February 26.



Club Officers 2019

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Volunteers Needed to Support our Club

We are always looking for volunteers for the pond club! We use volunteers throughout the year, and for all different types of tasks. We guarantee a lot of fun and you will gain skills that you can put on your resume!! The amount of time you spend it totally up to you and we are flexible and understanding. Because our "Light Up the Night" tour is gaining a tremendous amount of interest, we really need folks to help plan this event. Come on, you'll enjoy the fun!

As a committee coordinator:

- You would be invited to the board meetings held once per month.
- Attendance at the board meeting is encouraged, but would not necessarily be required. However, a brief written update should be provided as needed and can be forwarded to the Secretary for inclusion in the agenda.
- It is critical that the board and officers are made aware of progress made and any obstacles encountered. If any coordinator needs help, the board just needs to be made aware so that additional resources and assistance can be offered. Help is easy to get if we just know that help is needed.

We need the following committee coordinators:

Transportation Coordinator for the evening pond tour
Evening Pond Tour Coordinators
Catering Coordinator for the evening pond tour
Monthly Meeting Speaker and Location Coordinator
Annual October Banquet Coordinator
Pond Tour Coordinator
Election Coordinator

Please let Sherry Avellar (trout42@hotmail.com) or 801-664-9528 know that you are interested. She will be happy to answer any questions you have.

If you would like to hold one of our **monthly meetings** to show off your pond, or submit your pond for the pond tour, please let one of the officers know! We'd love to have you!



UPCOMING EVENTS



March Meeting

March 21, 2019 7:00 pm
Conservation Garden Park
8275 South 1300 West
West Jordan
Topic: Introduction to Localscapes
Speaker: Cindy Bee-Utah Water Conservation Garden
Meal provided
No adult beverages

Pastabilities to stamp out hunger!



Bring in any pasta item for the food bank and get 1 extra raffle ticket!

April Meeting

April 18, 2019 7:00 pm
Fruits and Veggies is what its all about!



Bring in any can of fruit or veggies for the food bank and get 1 extra raffle ticket!
Red Butte Garden
Topic and Speaker: To be announced

May Meeting

May 16, 2019 7:00 pm
Details Pending

June Meeting

June 20, 2019 7:00 pm
Details Pending

July Annual Club BBQ

July 18, 2019 7:00 pm
Details Pending

August Pond Tour

August 10-11, 2019 (**Second** Weekend in August)
Annual Pond Tour

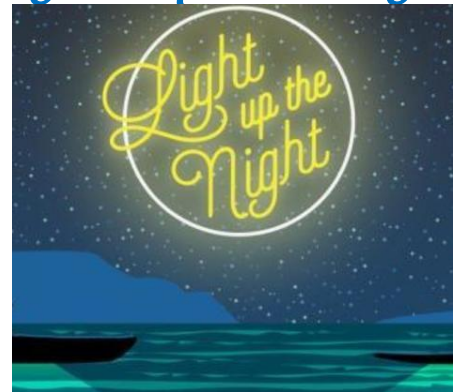
August Meeting

August 15, 2019 7:00 pm
Details Pending

September Special Event

September 7, 2019
Evening Pond Tour!

Light Up the Night!



More details coming soon on this new, very special event!

September Meeting

September 12, 2019 7:00 pm
Details Pending

October

October 17, 2019 7:00 pm
Annual Banquet
Details Pending

Fill the pond food drive

This year, our club is planning a year-long food drive in support of the Utah Food Bank. We encourage all members to bring items to our meetings and we will deliver them to the Food Bank. Cash donations are also most welcome. We feel it is critical to help our community feed hungry citizens, especially children.

Let's see how much we can collect by our October Banquet!



Most needed food items:

Peanut Butter
Mac & Cheese
Canned Meats (tuna, chicken or beef)
Chili
SpaghettiOs/Ravioli
Canned Fruits and Veggies
Rice, Pasta, Oatmeal
Other Boxed Meals

Current tally:

60 pounds of food

\$215.00



Volunteer Opportunities in our Community

Murray Senior Center has advised us that they need help maintaining their small patio garden area this summer, 1-2 hours per week to weed and clean up spent flowers. One person doesn't have to do it all, we can tag team this effort. Some planting may be required with help from Murray City Parks Department. If you are interested, contact Sherry Avellar at trout42@hotmail.com. They are so grateful for help, please consider this opportunity!

Down in the Garden with Rosie

By Rosie Cobbley



Hey there! It's officially Spring on March 20th, and those of us who are addicted to Veggie gardening are getting itchy fingers. Got your seeds? Got some fresh planting mix (for raised beds)/compost (for in ground planting)?



Ready, Set, GO!

Not so fast- you have to wait for the frost to get out of the soil before you dig, or you'll destroy the soil structure, resulting in poor plant performance. We have a (debatable!) saying in England- if you can sit on the soil comfortably in your underwear, it's warm enough to dig. But you knew we were all nuts, didn't you?

There's an abundance of early season veggies you can plant in the Spring, which will be done producing by the time you need to plant your warm season veg. This doubles your production, making

more efficient use of your space. If you are going to plant root crops- ie carrots, beets etc, these require a longer growing season to maturity, so those need to be planted early, and occupy that area for the whole season.

If you have limited gardening space, think outside of the box- Containers, Vertical gardens, Window boxes, all provide space for veggies with shallow roots-just remember they need a constant supply of water and nutrients as they will dry out quickly. You can even add veggies to your flower beds- how about a pretty border of crunchy lettuce and radishes? Here's a few of my favorites-: Peas, Fava Beans (need support), Swiss Chard, Spinach, Lettuce, Radishes..... Plant what you like to eat.

Don't have room in the back garden? How about a front garden veggie planting? This option needs to be carefully thought out, well designed, with a lot of shape and structure- as it can easily look messy. A focal point like a bird bath or bubbling rock would give it a center, and add some attractive flagstone or paver pathways to define the shape. One drawback- you may be sharing your crops..... By the way, that pesky Rabbit is out there somewhere.....





The Koi Spot



Goldfish, Comets and Shubunkins

Koi and goldfish are both species of carp but the smaller goldfish varieties are descended from the Prussian carp while the koi is an intensively bred version of the common carp. The Prussian carp descendants are more suitable for smaller ponds because of their size (adult size 25cm).

Keeping smaller fish does not mean you have to compromise on color or pattern. Goldfish have been bred in a variety of sizes and shapes including the common goldfish, the long-tailed comet and the intricately patterned shubunkins. All the above will grow to 10-12 inches in a well filtered pond and will provide all the beauty and fun of keeping the more demanding koi.



Common Goldfish

The common goldfish is one of the hardiest species

of domesticated freshwater fish. Goldfish are found in a variety of colors ranging from red, yellow, orange, white, bronze or black. Goldfish are an excellent choice for a small outdoor fish pond. Goldfish variants also have an advantage over koi as they don't dig out roots of aquatic plants allowing you to add lilies and other ornamental plants to your pond. Koi are the thugs of the water gardening world and will uproot and eat everything in the pond.

Goldfish will grow up to 10-12 inches in well filtered water and can live for decades. Indoor fish in traditional fish bowls tend to have a much shorter life due to less than ideal conditions. There is a belief that goldfish grow to the size of their tank but this only partially true. What governs fish size is the concentration of pheromones in the water (a larger volume of water will be more dilute) so the reason immature fish in a fishbowl stay small (and die young) is that their water is not in a healthy state. The same applies to comets, Shubunkins and any other domesticated fish.



By the way, the common myth about goldfish only having a 3 second memory is also untrue. Research has shown that their memories are effective over 3 months at least and that they can even be trained to swim through hoops and operate levers. One experiment showed that goldfish learn to push a lever for food but are also smart enough to stop using it if the food supply is stopped after only an hour. These guys are pretty smart!

Goldfish can tolerate low temperatures and will survive frozen over ponds of adequate depth for brief periods provided they have enough oxygen and food. They are primarily herbivores so will prefer a herbivore fish food. Their diet can also be supplemented with pieces of cucumber, broccoli, shelled peas and clippings from certain aquatic plants. High protein feed like worms should be avoided.



Comet Goldfish

Comets were bred in America and are so called because of their long flowing tails and fins reminiscent of a comet (obviously). Comets sport a range of colors with red, orange, yellow, white and bi-color versions. They can easily provide level of variety and interest as their larger Koi cousins. If you want a comet with similar markings to a koi the bi-colored Sarasa comet is the one to go for.

Comets are as hardy as common goldfish and will have the same expected size and lifespan with mature fish reaching 10-12 inches in size.



Shubunkin Goldfish

Shubunkins have the same basic shape as the common goldfish and have longer, more flowing fins than the comet. Shubunkins are more likely to be calico colored with a more speckled pattern. Unlike the comet their body patterns also extend to their fins and tails which look beautiful when they are swimming. Shubunkins also come in the same range of colors as the comet but can also include a vivid pale blue background. The bluer the coloring on the fish the more valuable it will be. Shubunkins are extremely hardy and will survive in any conditions that a common goldfish can handle.

They will grow up to 18 inches long in ideal conditions.

Goldfish for beginners

Under the right conditions, goldfish are a fantastic species of fish to keep. They are hardy, adaptable, long-lived, and are an excellent fish for a novice. Like koi they boast a wide range of colors and patterns to provide years of interest keeping and breeding the fish. Unlike koi, goldfish do not require very large ponds or specialized filtering equipment so are also a much more cost effective option.

These tea bags are made to look like a goldfish swimming in your mug.



IHOP The Ponder Frog...



Ponders Those Incredible Sucking Machines... Vacuums!

Keeping your garden pond clean can be a chore, especially if you suffer with large amounts of pond sludge and debris buildup. A popular option would be to invest in a quality pond vacuum, which can quickly and effectively remove the bottom muck without the need of manual netting. Do you need a Pond Vacuum? Are they worth it? Let's find out!

Pond vacuums are extremely useful for removing large amounts of bottom muck and sludge that can cause issues with water quality. Unless you have a pond vacuum cleaner, the only other options to remove pond sludge is with a basic net or a bacteria-based remover. These methods are usually more suitable for smaller ponds, or ponds without fish, as they can take time to be effective. A net won't be able to remove the finer bottom sediment, and will just make your waters dirtier as you stir up the bottom muck. A bacteria-based remover takes time to work, and can't remove larger debris, such as twigs, gravel, or stones.

If you have heavy debris buildup, especially in a fish stocked pond, a pond vacuum would be a better option to quickly and effectively remove bottom muck. Heavy duty pond vacuums are able to remove both larger debris, as well as pond silt, so you can clear most of your ponds bottom waste in a single session. Having a pond vacuum also provides you much better cleaning control, allowing you to quickly remove harmful buildup at any time of the year. Most bacteria-based removers only function in

warmer temperatures, whereas a pond vacuum can be used during both summer and winter months. Due to their effectiveness, pond vacuums have become very popular in koi stocked ponds in particular, as koi can be quite sensitive to excess sludge levels. They're also a popular choice if you simply want a spotless pond floor with maximum water clarity. Even though pond muck doesn't affect water clearness directly, fish can easily stir up the bottom muck which causes dirty water. For an extra clear pond, it's sometimes best just to remove all the sludge!

Hand-Pumped Vacs or Power Vacs (Comparison)

There are currently two kinds of pond vacuums on the market – hand-pumped vacuums and power vacuums – each being more suited for different circumstances:



1) Hand- Pumped Vacuum

As the name suggests, a hand-pumped vac requires manually pumping by hand to remove pond muck. These are great little solutions for tiny ponds due to their cost and ease of use. They work by either driving water through a waste net that traps sucked up debris, or directly through a discharge hose which you can position away from your pond. Some newer models can make use of your mains water power, too, so less work is needed to pump the water. In general, manual pump vacuums are only suited for the smallest of ponds, or even aquariums, and are not efficient enough to clear a normal fish pond reliably.

2) Electrical Power Vacuum



The other type of pond vacuum is an electrical power vacuum, which uses a surface pump and is able to suck up much heavier debris compared to a hand pump. These vacuums are usually better for most ponds due to their effective suction power, which easily clears pond muck, sludge, silt, and gravel.

These powerful pond vacs are usually supplied with a range of pump ratings, flow rates, handle lengths and different hose attachments. Power vacuums provide a great level of flexibility in terms of cleaning for all kinds of pond sizes. Due to their powerful suction capabilities, they can also double as a swimming pool cleaner if you have one!

What Vacuum Type should you consider?

Unless you have a tiny pond, or have no available mains socket to power an electrical vacuum, a power vacuum is recommended in most situations. They're easier to use, provide better cleaning results, and a quality vac will simply last you years! If you have sludge, a heavily stocked koi pond, or just hate cleaning in general, a power vacuum would be a great, long-term investment.

Great quality pond vacuums aren't always cheap, so you need to make sure you're making the right purchase. A good pond vacuum should provide powerful cleaning for years, as well as be reliable and cost effective. There are a few things to consider when making a purchase.

Vacuum Power Consumption & Flow Rate



Larger vacuums often have stronger internal pumps, higher circulation rates, and bigger capacities. You will need to make sure the vacuum you choose is suitable for your ponds size. If you have a larger pond with a lot of sludge build up, a more heavy-duty model may be needed with a stronger internal pump. If you have a small pond with minimal sludge, a less powerful vacuum with a lower capacity may be fine. In general, selecting a more powerful model is a safer choice and will provide more flexibility in future if you decide to expand your pond, or suddenly have a lot of debris to remove. Most vacuums contain internal pumps that are used to cycle water through the main collection chamber and then back into the pond or through a drainage valve. The internal pump is rated in gallons per hour (GPH), which indicates the amount of water the vacuum can cycle per hour. The higher the GPH rating, the faster the vacuum will be able to cycle water, which may be useful if you also want to use the device for drainage, water changes, or simply faster all-round cleaning.

As well as water circulation rates, you may also want to take into account a vacuum's power consumption and energy efficiency. Since most high-end models are rated at 1000w+, they're not exactly cheap to run for long periods. Sadly, this isn't something you can avoid, as almost all water vacuums are very electrically hungry to power the large amount of suction and circulation required for efficient cleaning. The best way to reduce on-going costs would be to choose a model that meets all your cleaning criteria, which will help shorten the duration of cleaning sessions and reduce the need for possible additional cleans.

Attachments, Accessories, and Nozzle Sizes



Attachments and accessories are important for cleaning around tight corners and wider surfaces. Depending on how much flexibility you want in terms of cleaning, you may need to consider the vacuum attachments and nozzle sizes. For example, a basic vacuum with a single head attachment may not be big enough to remove leaves and larger debris, but would be fine for silt. Whereas a vacuum with multiple head attachments should provide different sizes for both fine build up and large debris. Having more options is always better, so selecting a model that provides this flexibility is a good choice. At the very minimum you'd want at least wide brim cleaning head (pictured) and a smaller narrow head (pictured) which will allow you to clean both larger surface areas and tighter corners without much issue. Bristles on the end of attachments are also very useful for dislodging debris caught in cracks and folds of the pond liner, but will also make your water cloudy so a second clean may be necessary.

Hose Length vs Max Suction Depth



If you have a deep pond, you'll need to consider the maximum hose length and suction strength.

You need to make sure the power cord is long enough to plug into an available mains socket, and the hose itself needs to be long enough to reach the lowest depth point of your pond. When selecting a pond vacuum, you also need to take into account the hose length compared with the maximum suction depth. A vacuum's hose length is usually much longer than its max suction depth, so a hose with a length of 16ft may only have a maximum suction depth of 6ft. There is no point having a long hose if the suction doesn't work at your required depth level! If you have a large but fairly shallow pond, a longer hose can be useful for cleaning wide areas without the need to wade into the actual water. However, if you have a very deep but small pond, it may be better investing in a vacuum with a slightly shorter hose length but with higher suction depth potential. The suction depth is determined primarily by the internal pump and its ability to drive water uphill (also called its "head height"). High-end vacuum models generally come with powerful suction capacity and better pumps, but you'll still need to double-check this to be sure it meets your individual needs and criteria.

Vacuum Weight & Mobility Options

Vacuums are heavy especially when full with debris, sludge and much, so you want to ensure you purchase a model with sturdy wheels and handle designs. Selecting a vacuum with wheels is always good practice for any size of pond or water garden. If you're determined on a particular model without mobility options, be sure to select one which is light enough to transport comfortably. Static water vacuums are not really designed for larger ponds, and are more so for smaller swimming pools where they can clean the entire area without moving from the pool side.

If you're purchasing a vacuum for large-scale cleaning, which would mean you'll likely need a higher capacity and pump strength, there is no getting around the weight of top-end models – they're just heavy by design! If you just have a small garden pond that only needs that occasional clean every few months, choosing a lighter model may save you money, time, and some potential backache later down the line!

Holding Capacity & Discharge Method

How much pond muck and debris do you actually have? If you want faster removal with less cleaning, choosing a vacuum with a higher debris holding capacity is beneficial. Vacuums with a lower holding capacity generally need to be cleaned and discharged more frequently. As well as this, you will want to know what kind of discharge options are on offer. Some pond vacuums allow for much easier discharge than others, with some vacuums also providing a way to filter the water directly back into your pond. In general, higher-end models will provide an automatic discharge function and some internal filter capability, providing the option to discharge directly into a drain or even back into the pond after filtering out the worst of the muck. Entry-level vacuums usually don't have this capability, providing just a storage chamber which collects sludge and needs to be manually emptied once full.

Before you start cleaning, if you have any small fish in your pond you might want to remove them and place them into a separate container while you clear the pond floor. Due to the power of these vacuums, small fish or baby fish can easily be sucked into the vacuum and become injured if not careful.



Random Thoughts



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Photography by Adilfa

OWEN MORTENSEN

Exploring the Art of Nature