



June

Hello fellow ponders,

June is here, and with it longer days, warmer water and perfect conditions for enjoying our ponds and gardens. We hope you are enjoying every single day of this wonderful weather.

A big “thank you” to all those who helped with our fun June meeting. Sandra and Theron Stokes hosted the meeting in the yard of their beautiful new home in Daybreak. IFA sponsored the meeting, provided Jimmy Johns sandwiches and drinks, and arranged for Earthwings to come. Earthwings brought four beautiful birds, and we learned about a pied crow, a barn owl, a hawk and a Eurasian Eagle Owl. They were well trained and thrilled us with their flying and landing abilities. Thank you IFA and Earthwings!

In July we will meet at the Cobbleys’ pond. Richard and Rosie have a lovely yard and you don’t want to miss it!

Read on to learn about using hostas in your ponds, and the contributions of dragonflies to water gardens. Don’t miss our member spotlight; this month we feature Craig and Claudia Larsen.

Have a great summer!



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Know Your Pond Plants: Hostas



Hostas are a great foliage plant for Utah gardens, and grow well around ponds. They like consistently moist soil, and thrive where drainage is good. They do well in a gravel bog filter with decent through flow.

Hostas are a popular garden plant for very simple reasons. They don't need sun. In fact, they thrive in shade and part-shade, unlike many other plants. And hostas are extremely easy to care for and propagate. Plus, as perennials, hostas come back every year with proper care. You can even grow hostas in pots.

Hosta is a clump-forming plant that grows from rhizomatous roots. It produces blooms on long stalks that extend well above the clumping foliage in late spring or summer, but the foliage is the main

attraction. Among the hundreds of hosta cultivars, there

are fast-growing, medium-growing. and slow-growing varieties. Smaller varieties tend to grow fastest and can reach their mature size in three to five years; larger types can take five to seven years. There's also a wide range of sizes, from mini to mammoth.

Hostas are normally planted as potted transplants or bare root divisions. They are commonly considered shade plants; however, hostas need some sun to thrive. Gold-leaf varieties actually need some sun to develop their rich color. But you should not plant hostas in perpetually hot, sunny areas. Morning sun with afternoon shade is ideal for those varieties that tolerate higher amounts of sun.



Many of us in the Utah Water Gardena and Koi Club are sold on active bog gravel filtration. Bog filters are extremely efficient at removing nutrients from the pond water. This is accomplished by pumping pond water evenly though a gravel bed via a grid of perforated pipes. The gravel provides the surface area for nitrifying bacteria to colonize. The bacteria reduce fish and plant waste into plant food. Growing in the gravel are bog plants that take up the plant food. The water is returned to the pond stripped of all nutrients thereby "starving" the algae in your pond, inhibiting growth.

Member Spotlight Craig & Claudia Larsen

By Gil Avellar



Craig and Claudia Larsen have been loyal pond club members since 1996. They have hosted pond tours, meetings and BBQs in their beautiful yard, which many of you have seen. When I spoke to them the other day, over a glass of their homemade concord grape juice made from grapes they grow themselves, I learned so much more about them and the history of their beautiful pond and garden and I wanted to share that with the members.

Craig is a retired Podiatrist and they bought their home in 1969. Half their large backyard was just wild and unfinished. In 1993, Craig and Claudia met David

Hill at the Home & Garden show at the Salt Palace. David was very knowledgeable about ponds and shared his love for all things ponds with Craig, and Craig was hooked. Craig drew up a plan for a small pond, rented a Ditch Witch and started digging. His first pond was six feet deep and he distributed the dirt to all his neighbors. His first attempt to stock the pond was with trout, but trout are hard to see with a black liner so they ate the trout and switched to koi in 1994. They bought the original koi from PetSmart but those didn't last very long either. Craig said all but two died so he decided to get better koi from

California, and one of those koi is now 32 years old and still swimming in their pond. Another one was unfortunately stolen one night right from their pond.

One day, Claudia said to Craig that the pond is nice but it isn't big enough, and that was all it took for Craig to gather his kids and start digging again. That expansion was done in 1995 and included a



brood pond and a stream. Craig did it all himself, and still does all the landscaping and pond maintenance.

Craig told us a very funny story about a neighbor of his that you might know (our very own vice-president – Kelly Flint). One of Craig’s many hobbies is photography and he has become quite good at it. He showed his best pictures to Kelly, and Kelly is now taking some really great pictures. [Editor’s note: Craig is an *amazing* photographer. He once carried a heavy view camera through the narrows at Zions National Park. He wrapped the camera in a black garbage bag and held it over his head to keep it out of the water. He’s a very patient teacher and loves to share his knowledge.] Craig also proudly showed his DIY pond to Kelly, who at the time did not have a pond. It didn’t take long for Kelly to not only build a pond, but to build a better pond system. [Editor’s note: its different, *not* better.] Not to be outdone, Craig then showed Kelly his “modest” chicken coop and lovely chickens that he was quite proud of. Kelly thought chickens sounded great and built a five-star chicken coop to house his prize hens. [Editor’s note: memories differ as to who got chickens first, and Craig’s coop is quite large and delightful.] Well, Craig is really happy to tell this great story of two neighbors

who share similar interests.

Claudia is a great supporter of the pond club who opens her yard and garden to meetings and events -- she’s a great hostess. She also provided 24 handmade teddy bears for the Wrap Ukraine with Quilts effort the pond club is supporting this year. They will be sent to refugees from Ukraine in Poland to give to children who badly need comfort and joy. Thanks Claudia!

Next time we have a meeting, have a chat with Craig and Claudia. You will learn a lot from their experiences with ponds, fish, chickens and photography.



2023 Meeting Schedule

- ◆ July 20 – Cobbleys’ pond
- ◆ August 17 – Horrocks’ Pond – Annual BBQ and Plant Exchange.
- ◆ September 21 – Larsens’ pond
- ◆ October 26 – Annual Banquet at Toscano’s in Draper

If you’d like to host a meeting, please let any us know! Call, text or email any pond club officer.

Our June Meeting

Our June meeting was hosted by the Stokes at their home in Daybreak, and featured a presentation by Earthwings



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A big thanks to IFA for sponsoring our June meeting. IFA arranged for Earthwings to attend, and paid for the delicious food!



Pondlife: Dragonflies

The Dragonflies are back in northern Utah! Not only are they fun to watch, they are beneficial insects for ponds and water gardens. They help to control mosquitoes, flies and other insects, so you can enjoy your outdoor area without being harassed by annoying insects. Having dragonflies around your



pond is also a good sign of a healthy pond ecosystem.

Dragonflies are expert insect catchers and they're able to hover, fly forward and backwards to catch their prey.

They also have excellent eyesight, with two large compound eyes that have thousands of lenses and three smaller eyes with simple lenses.

Dragonfly nymphs eat mosquito larvae in the water and adult dragonflies eat mosquitoes as well as flies, beetles, moths and other flying insects.

Common Utah Dragonflies

Many kinds of dragonflies are found in northern Utah, including eight-spotted skimmers, blue-eyed darners, flame skimmers, American ruby spots, and giant darners, among many others.

Dragonfly life cycle

A clean source of water like a backyard pond, water garden or lake is essential for dragonflies to breed because they lay their eggs in water, usually at the base of a plant.

When the eggs hatch, the nymphs live in the water and eat mosquito larvae, insects and tadpoles.

Once the nymph matures, it will turn into a dragonfly by emerging from the water, splitting its skin and crawling out.

Different species of dragonflies emerge throughout the year, so you may see dragonflies all summer long and into the fall near your backyard pond.

How to attract dragonflies to your pond

Planting a variety of different aquatic plants in and around your pond will help to attract dragonflies and their close relatives, damselflies.

Marginal plants like irises, bacopa and bull rush that grow in shallow water are ideal for dragonflies to lay their eggs at the base of the plant.



Dragonfly nymphs can also use marginal plants to climb out of the pond when they're ready to transition to adult dragonflies.



Floating plants like water lilies and water lettuce provide a place for adult dragonflies to rest while they're hunting for insects.

Flowering garden plants and vegetable plants will attract plenty of small insects to your garden that dragonflies can feed on.

Rocks are also beneficial for dragonflies. Laying some large flat rocks around the edge of the pond will give the dragonflies a place to sun themselves.

You can also place a few overhanging rocks at the edge of the pond for the dragonfly nymphs to hide underneath.

Hollow logs or driftwood placed in shallow areas of the pond are also good hiding places for nymphs and they can use the logs to crawl out of the water.

Things to avoid

Most fish will eat dragonfly larvae swimming underwater, so if you want to attract dragonflies to your pond it's best to avoid stocking at least part of your pond with fish.

Pond skimmers will suck up dragonfly larvae. You can

use a long handled net to scoop any leaves or debris out of the pond.

Other things to avoid include outdoor insect zappers that will kill dragonflies as well as mosquitoes, and pesticides sprayed in the garden can harm beneficial insects like dragonflies.

Algaecide and other chemical treatments added to the pond water can also kill dragonfly larvae.

Cleaning your pond

The muck that builds up on the bottom of the pond provides shelter for dragonfly nymphs, so you have to be careful when cleaning your pond that you don't destroy their hiding place.

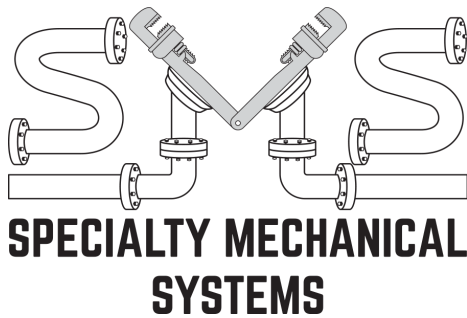
Dragonflies are not only pretty to watch, they're also great for controlling mosquito populations around ponds.

The more dragonflies in your yard, the less annoying insects you'll have.

Adapted from watergardenadvice.com



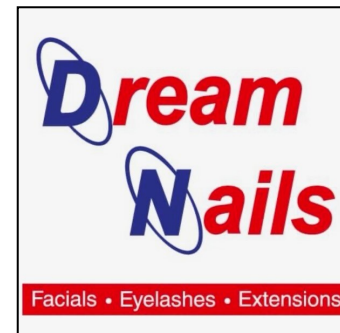
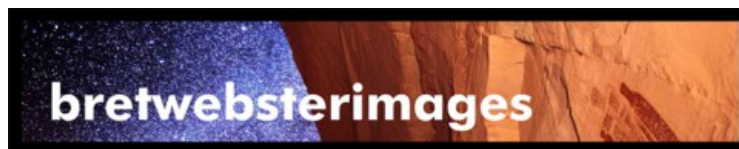
Thank you sponsors!



Draper Location



Thank you sponsors!



The logo features a stylized blue 'U' with a red and white koi fish swimming inside it. To the right of the 'U' is the word 'Utah' in blue. Below this, the words 'Water Garden & Koi' are written in a blue serif font, and 'Club' is written in a large, light green sans-serif font.

Who we are

The Utah Water 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, a pond tour, and sharing our water gardening experiences. We are a group of volunteers dedicated to 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 this year, we're moving to a biennial (every other year) tour, and there will not be a tour in 2023. If you'd like to be involved in planning or be on the 2024 tour, please let us know! Future tours can only happen with your participation!

Check out the Club's website at UtahWaterGardenClub.org.

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