

Highlights

📁 Last month's meeting on Critters

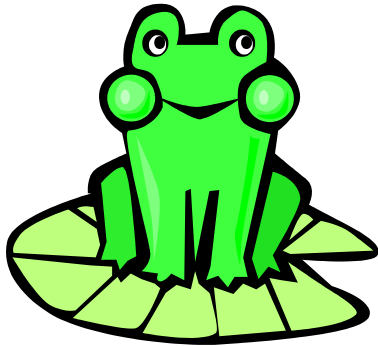
📁 My water is green AGAIN

📁 Water Garden Tour Committee

Meeting

📁 May 11th at 7:00 p.m. at Lou & Wes Watkins' s water garden 711 Peaceable Acres, Stillwater, OK

📁 That's north on Boomer to 1st entrance past the golf course and turn right. Their house is 1st on Rt.



What's Up Under The Lily Pad



Contact Information
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What you always wanted to know about "critters" but were afraid to ask? Thanks to Conrad Kleinholtz and Tim O'Connell we learned a lot about critters at the last SWGS meeting. Thank you Buck and Sue Wright for hosting us. It got a little cool so after Conrad's Power Point presentation we headed into the house to hear from Tim. He surprised us by announcing he had observed or heard 15 different species of birds in the short time we were outside. Conrad will soon let us put his Power Point presentation on our web site, just in case ya'll want to make sure you are picking up the right frog or turtle for your water garden.

Attracting Ladybugs to the Garden

Apart from aphids, which ladybugs love to eat, they also require a source of pollen for food and are attracted to specific types of plants. The most popular ones have umbrella shaped flowers such as fennel, dill, cilantro, caraway, angelica, tansy, wild carrot & yarrow. Other plants that also attract ladybugs include cosmos (especially the white ones), coreopsis, and scented geraniums, and dandelions.

Apart from planting attractive plants in the garden, you can also promote ladybug populations by cutting back on spraying insecticides. Not only are ladybugs sensitive to most synthetic insecticides,

but if the majority of their food source is gone, they won't lay their eggs in your garden. As difficult as it may be, allowing aphids to live on certain plants is necessary to ensure that there is enough food for ladybugs. In addition, resist the urge to squish bugs & eggs in the garden, unless you're certain that they are not beneficial.

Purchasing Ladybugs

Sometimes there just isn't enough room in the garden to have ladybug-attracting plants or you or your neighbor may have been over diligent with the pest control. In certain circumstances, purchasing ladybugs can help to control a severe problem or help a population become established.

Scientists have found that indoor-reared ladybugs fail to find their own food when released outside so **the majority of commercially available ladybugs are collected from the wild.** Before releasing them into the garden, here are a few tips to help ensure that they stay where you want them:

1. If you only release ladybugs after sun down or before sun-up, they tend to stay put. Ladybugs navigate by the sun.
2. Pre-water the area where you are releasing them. Not only will the ladybugs appreciate the drink, free-moisture on the leaves helps the ladybugs to "stick" to plants.

3. In the warm months, it helps to chill the ladybugs in the fridge before releasing them. Ladybugs tend to crawl more than fly in colder temperatures and the overnight stay in the fridge won't harm them in any way.



4. On severely infested plants like roses, drape a floating row cover or thin sheet over the plant and release the ladybugs underneath. Within a day, the ladybugs will have found the aphids and will be happily munching away at them.

One Note: **The Asian Ladybug**

If you are planning to purchase ladybugs for your garden or greenhouse, select the native ladybugs species, *Hippodamia convergens*, rather than the Asian ladybug, *Harmonia axyridis*. Although the latter is very effective at controlling aphids and is often the species of choice for commercial greenhouse growers, it is the main cause for "ladybug infestations" **inside** houses.

While the native ladybug is happy to hibernate outdoors, the Asian species requires warmer temperatures and often ends up becoming a pest to homeowners as it congregates in large numbers inside. In addition, it seems to be establishing fairly large numbers in the wild and there is some concern it will begin competing with the native species. Some suppliers of predatory insects do sell both species and it's best to choose the native one if you can.

New subject—**Algae Again aaaagh!!!** I know our water garden plants are not growing much yet, so the alga continues to be a problem. Why? Because if there are not enough plants to shade the water, there is too much light helping the algae to grow. We have talked about Algae Fix and similar products, but you also might consider dying your water blue or black to shut out the light. (An added benefit is, it is harder to see the algae.) So if you have dipped out all the decaying leaves, etc. continue to use Algae Fix or related products as directed, and use an algae blocker pond dye. It was also suggested to me recently that adding lava rock into the water helps—and then there is the whole barley thing. For more information, go to www.watergardens.com. By the way **someone needs to "fess up."** Who left the bottle of blue WG dye on a certain member's doorstep. She thought it was me!!! It was not!!! She liked it, so "fess up."

Next Meeting:

Wes and Lou Watkins will be hosting the next water garden meeting on Tuesday, May 11th at their house, 711 Peaceable Acres in Stillwater, at 7:00 p.m. A couple months ago, when I told Wes we were looking for a convenient place to demonstrate **a water garden vacuum**. He volunteered his water garden right off. I told him he could not clean his garden until May and he said that was fine. His water garden is a good one for the demo because his patio comes right up to the water garden. It will be easy for all to see what is going on. I have heard a lot of interest in this product and hope all of you will come to hear Randy Stewart of "Unit Liner" from Shawnee. Vacuums I have seen are either too expensive or too cheaply made to actually work. We have been told this product is different.

The Water Garden Tour committee met and is working hard to deliver a top notch tour to our community. If you would like to help out, or would like to put your garden on the tour, call Mike Grayson at 642-2437 or email him at MMJGRAYSON57@aol.com. You may also email Barbara Vick at barbara@air-o.com. See you at the next meeting. Maybe you will get lucky and win a door prize.

"Me? I won something?"

