

April 20, 2006
Issue 10-02



SKAPA Newsletter

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By Don Harrawood

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SKAPA
Appreciating Koi through
Friendship and Knowledge
Since 1996

Celebrating our 10th year

From our President



A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER BETTY COFFEY

We are pleased to have you join us!!!

What a great meeting to start off the new year with old friends and guest at the home of Elizabeth Hill, Liz, your warm hospitality was very much appreciated, thank you so very much for the information regarding the clay water supplement and homemade koi paste food recipe you handed out. Liz also donated a Koi belt buckle won by Jack Makepeace and a Koi Dress pin won by Jaime Carrillo, made for a great raffle, much thanks to Liz.

SKAPA would like to welcome Dr. Victoria Milne, or as everyone calls her "Dr. Vikki" as the El Paso Zoo's new veterinarian, she comes from a 2 year stint with the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore and a year with the Tulsa, Oklahoma Zoo prior to that. We invite "Dr. Vikki" to meet with us soon, and welcome her to El Paso.

Congratulations to Linda Doughtie-Lane for her El Paso Times article about home-grown herbs in the Living section on Wednesday April 19th.

Trivia for today: Where was the first zoo in the U.S.?.....Philadelphia.

Remember, **SKAPA's KOI OF THE YEAR** will be selected at our April meeting. Bring a regular picture or digital (min 2mp) of your favorite KOI to the meeting. You may enter as many koi as you would like, but please be sure your name is on the back of each photo. The winning KOI will be entered in this years **AKCA** seminar in Buffalo, NY. Also, we will be electing **SKAPA KOI PERSON OF THE YEAR**.

Thank you Darrell Dodd and Don Harrawood for representing **SKAPA** with their "Koi Pond Creations" and "Creating Natural Habitats" an Outdoor Living Series Program at the Keystone Botanical Garden.

See you all, Tuesday, April 25th at ANDALE MEXICAN CUISINE, 3800 Mesa at 6:30pm with photos of your beautiful Koi.

Happy Pondering,
Smitty 

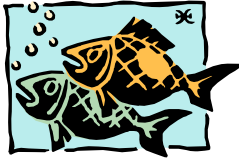
Bob & Judy Birch are selling their 210 gallon aquarium with wood cabinet, stand, lights and filter for \$600.00. For more information contact Smitty at: (915) 494-4KOI (4964).



Koi are very sociable and love a crowd of friends. They are less shy when they are in a large group. Your Koi will eat from your hand if you have the patience to earn their friendship.

Feed them in the same place every time. Drop a small handful of pellets and stay there to observe. The bravest or hungriest will start to eat and the rest will follow. They must see you when they eat. Do not walk away from the pond before they start to eat. Withhold food for a day if they will not eat in front of you.

Gradually, the Koi will equate you with food. Tease them closer with small sprinklings of food. Put your hands in the water while they eat. The Koi will perceive that food comes from your hand. Start with just a few pellets. The bravest Koi will soon be nudging your hand. It is only a matter of time and their friendship will be yours. Soon all of your fish will swim, jumping and splashing toward you every time you walk by the pond. You can tickle their chins and pet their heads.



KOI Talk
By Don Harrawood
SKAPA Koi Health Advisor

GREEN WATER AND STRING ALGAE

Green water and string algae are different forms of algae. Both can cause considerable problems for ponds through out the year. Green water differs from string algae in that it cannot be physically removed from the pond; whereas string algae is stringy or hair like, and can be physically removed.

What Causes Green Water?

Green water is caused by the presence of millions of microscopic algae particles, each consisting of one cell. This algae occurs naturally in almost all bodies of water, and can be a problem in ponds during the spring and summer months. In order to grow, algae requires light and nutrients. An excess of either can result in heavy growth and very green water. The nutrients required for algae to grow are normally nitrate and phosphate. Green water is normally worse during summer months when days are longer, temperatures are warmer, and light is stronger. These factors greatly increase the rate at which green water can occur.

What Causes String Algae?

String algae occur naturally in almost all bodies of water and is encouraged to grow by the presence of phosphate, nitrate and sunlight. Phosphate is a vital component of fish foods and therefore enters the water through uneaten food and fish waste. Nitrate is produced as the end product of the biological filtration and through the natural breakdown of organic matter in the pond. Nutrient concentrations tend to build up in the pond over time particularly in the summer when the fish are more active and being well fed. The increased sunlight plus these increased nutrient levels dramatically accelerate the growth of string algae with some species being capable of doubling its weight each day or two.

Steps for Avoiding Green Water and String Algae Problems

There are a number of pond management techniques that can be called upon to help reduce the growth of algae:

- First, you should feed your fish only high quality fish food. Poor quality diets are not well digested by the fish, resulting in excess waste being produced that contribute greatly to a high nutrient load into the pond. This excess of nutrients will stimulate an increased growth of both types of algae.
- Adding plants to the pond can also help limit the growth of algae, since aquatic plants compete with the algae for the nutrients in the pond water. Water lilies in particular are great for this purpose, since their leaves help cover the ponds surface and shut out much of the sunlight required to stimulate the growth of algae.
- Keep the pond bottom clean and clear of sediment. Decaying of this sediment increases the nutrient load for stimulating the growth of algae.

Controlling Green Water

The most effective way to control green water is the addition of ultraviolet lights (U.V. lights) to the pond water circulation system. These devices work by irradiating the pond water that flows through them with ultraviolet light. This ultraviolet light kills green water algae, allowing it to clump together, so that it can be separated from pond water by a filter. This is an excellent method of keeping a pond free from green water year around. It is important to size the ultraviolet light correctly, as its effectiveness depends on the contact time between the light and the water passing through. In general, an ultraviolet light should support a flow rate that allows the pond total water volume to pass through the light every hour. U.V. bulbs should be replaced approximately once per year in order to keep the unit working effectively. The quartz sleeve containing the bulb should be checked and cleaned periodically. If it gets dirty it will cut down on the amount of ultraviolet light reaching the water.

There are other means of removing green water if you do not have an ultraviolet light. These methods are more temporary. There are many products on the market for adding to pond water to remove green water algae. One I will mention is called AlgaeFix. This product when added, as directed to your pond water, causes the green water algae to clump, so it can be filtered out with a pond filter, or can be skimmed off the water surface with a skimmer net.

The addition of aquatic plants to compete with the algae for nutrients, and to shade the pond to deprive algae of essential light are two natural means of reducing the green water effect. A large water change will remove green water temporarily; however it returns rather rapidly.

Controlling String Algae.

The most effective way of removing string algae is by mechanical means; however this method is distasteful to most people. Again, there are numerous products on the market that will kill string algae. AlgaeFix does a very effective job of killing string algae and eliminating green water when used as directed. After the string algae is killed, you will need to remove the floating dead algae from the pond. Numerous plants in the pond will reduce algae by competing for nourishment from pond water. The addition of shade to the pond will decrease the growth of string algae, since it deprives it of needed sunlight in order to thrive.



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Calendar of Events

April 25th: The meeting this month will be special. Our guest will be **Dr. Michael Masser** of Texas A&M University. **Dr. Masser**, Texas Cooperative Extension Aquaculture Specialist, writer and contributor to many articles on ponds and fish management, will speak and answer questions on just about anything to do with Water garden and pond management.

The Meeting will be at Andale Mexican Cuisine, 3800 Mesa D-1 on Tuesday, April, 25th at 6:30 P.M. Remember this is a Tuesday evening meeting!!!

Dr. Masser is a favorite speaker at SKAPA because of his down to earth, understandable approach to Water Garden and Pond management.

April 28-30: FloraFest 2006 at the Centennial Museum at UTEP (Lecture & Plant Sale). For more info call: (520) 760-2393.

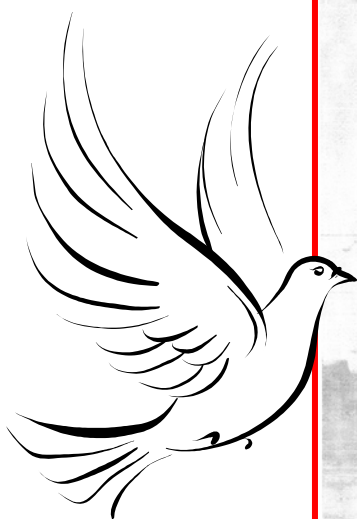
May 7th : Tucson water plant sale, 8 am to 1pm at Reid Park in Tucson, AZ. For more information call: (520) 760-2393.

**Annual FeatherFest and
Arts & Crafts Festival**
Saturday, May 13 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
**An Event Benefiting a Worthwhile Cause,
Keystone Heritage Park**

Regional Artisans offering
their arts and crafts for sale
Raffle for great gifts
Presentations on gardening, cooking, pond building and
other great topics will be offered
Tours of the EP Botanical Gardens, wetlands and
archeological site tours

Nature exhibits; Master Naturalists, El Paso's Zoo's trav-
eling Safari, Adopt a duck, Southwest Koi and Pond As-
sociation, Texas parks and wildlife and more
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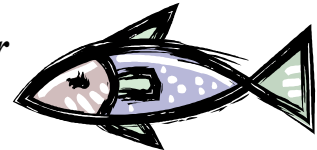
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Confessions of a Pond Watcher

By Darrell Dodd
SKAPA Newsletter Editor



Each year about this time I become addicted to pond watching. Pond watching you say? What is that and why would you sit around and just watch your pond. Don't you have a life?

The answer is that my pond is a small window on nature and in the spring and early summer nature comes to life and it's time to cleanse and renew. So many fascinating things are happening that I feel I must visit my pond every few hours just to keep up with what's going on.

First of all, my KOI come alive after their winter lethargy and are very active and always happy to see me. I also look for new little KOI. There are always one or two new little ones that begin to come out from hiding for the first time. Feeding my KOI during the Spring and Summer is a real treat and the addition of a feeding shelf this year lets me get right up close and personal with my fish including the Mosquito Fish that swarm in the warm shallow water of the Bog and feeding shelf.

This is also the time that those mysterious splashes occur when I approach the pond. That means that the Frogs are beginning to come out and the nightly serenades will soon begin. A closer look shows that the young Bullfrogs which wintered over as Tadpoles are in their second year and beginning to develop little legs. They will lose their tails and turn into small frogs this year. Frogs are one of my favorite forms of pond life because they can be so mysterious and they are a lot of fun to spot at night. I am always amazed at how many there are of them. Where the heck do they hide out all day?

Next, I get to see the first Dragonflies and Damselflies that buzz the pond and display their beautiful spring colors. During the winter I was able to spot some of the Larvae growing in the pond. It's a real wonder how such an ugly Larvae can turn into these beautiful and artful flyers. This time of year those pesky little Knats also start hovering over the pond. Why would I like this? Because, they will soon attract the Hummingbirds who will also hover over the pond eating the Knats for Protein. This is also the time of year when Monarch's and Swallowtail Butterflies begin to show up and catch my eye. Their erratic flying behavior never fails to get my attention and they are always attracted to the pond plants and the water.

Finally, the waterfalls and shallow Bog area attract any number of birds, including finches, doves, wrens, Robins, Ducks, and yes, some predators such as Red Tail Hawks and Heron's (both short leg Green and Long Leg Blue Heron's). Many of these birds including some of the more exotic species are just passing through and Spring and early Summer is the only time we will see them until next year.

Next month I hope to write about the many plants that begin to wake up and take shape this time of year, but for now I am out of space, besides, it's time to wonder back and see what else is happening in the Pond.



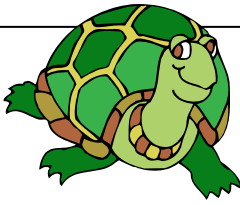
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Turtle Cove

by Elaine Hengen
SKAPA Secretary

With the weather heating up quickly, turtle activity in our yard is in full swing. We had one fatality over the winter. In early January, Snoopy, our nine year old male red eared slider, was floating dead in the pond. We had acquired Snoopy last summer from a gentleman who was closing down his pond. We can only speculate that the food in his system wasn't completely digested before hibernation and it poisoned him.

Everyone else made it through the winter and are present and accounted for. Lucky, an older desert box turtle, was sick in November and she made several trips to the vet. It was warm enough to get her back outside after recovery and is ok. Lucy, a Missouri three-toed box turtle who arrived at our house in late November, also is doing fine.

The fun side of spring is that it is quite interesting to watch the turtles emerge from hibernation and begin to acclimate back to normal life, with the box turtles looking for shade and the aquatics looking for sun. The not-so-fun side is that we are back to the daily food preparation and feeding, which for 22 turtles, is a fair amount of effort.

A couple of weeks ago, I received an interesting call at my office—a referral from the owner of the Salty Fin. The call was from Clif Stevens, a gentleman in town who rescues reptiles nationally. He had recently received some red eared sliders that had been rescued in New York and shipped to him. John and I received an invitation from Clif and his son Jackson to visit their home and reptiles. I personally hate snakes, but I sure wanted to see the turtles.

The first room in his house that we visited was, you guessed it, the snake room. Clif had more than a dozen snakes, some of whom actually looked pretty from a distance. Upon escaping the snakes, we met a large sulcata tortoise named Princess Kong (yes, they do get to be pretty big when they grow up). I had the pleasure of feeding this big girl a tomato. Now it was on to the turtles. First, we saw the rescued sliders—a total of 29 of the smallest hatchlings I had ever seen. Then we saw the adult sliders that Clif had in a different pond. Clif graciously agreed to allow us to have an adult male to replace Snoopy. While I was looking for a male, John and Clif went into the lizard room.

For those who are interested and qualified, there is an opportunity to adopt and raise some of the hatchlings. They must be raised in an indoor aquarium, with a filter, water heater and basking light for at least two years. Clif must view and approve your set up before you would be permitted to adopt any sliders and there is an adoption fee of \$10 for a hatchling and \$20 for an adult—to help defer the costs of their care prior to adoption. If you are interested, let me know and I can give your name to Clif. Our two babies are Reggie and Rene and they are really cute. They are getting along famously with Rex and Robin—the two midland painted turtles who share their aquarium. Both of the babies love to bask and they will often fall asleep on the rock under the warm light. A peaceful sight to behold—a fitting reward for all of the work in caring and feeding these wonderful animals.



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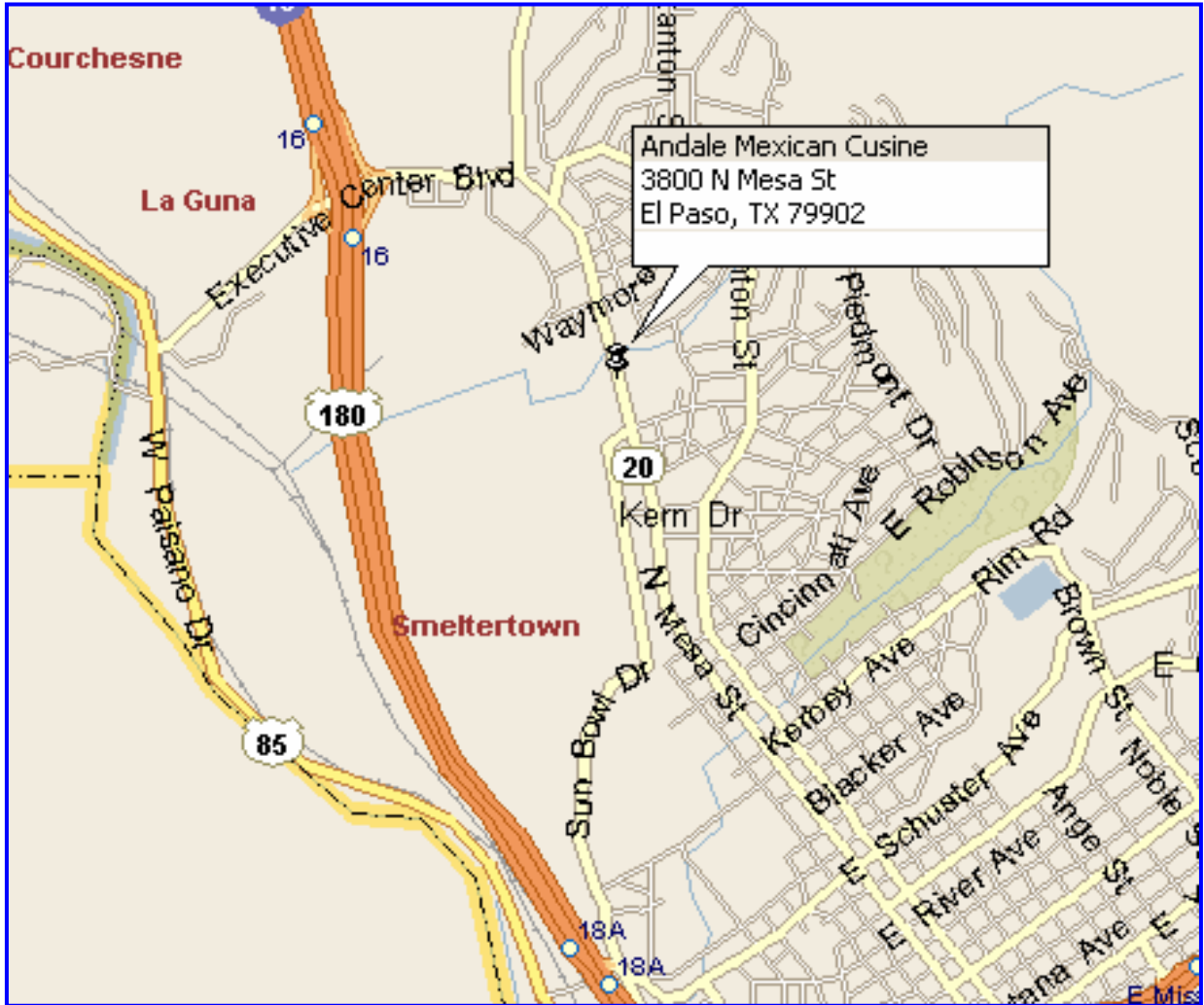


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