

The meeting minutes for the November and December meeting were not available at the time of this printing.

Ribbiting Report

This is not a ribbiting report as frogs should be hibernating and breathing through their skin. Then again maybe the title has more to do with the author than the season. Our founder and previous author referred to himself as the "BigToad" I am going to choose not to give myself a nickname. If and when one comes up, please do not tell me what it is! (Just kidding, Jamie)

I do like living in a region where the season changes are dramatic. I recently used the ice scraper to break the ice that had formed around the small air hose running vertically into the frozen water garden. It reached 35 degrees today and the fish were visible from a distance as they investigated the bubbles.

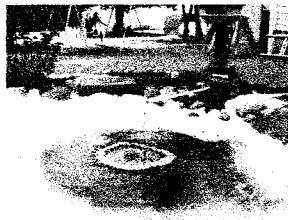
Pat and my gift to each other this Christmas was a black metal tree type bird feeder hanger. It has a large pedestal and attached base. It will have three feeders hanging from it. We plan on having a heated bird bath in the vicinity. We have not fed birds for the last three years and I must say that I have missed doing so. A beautiful blue Jay found it the first day. I want to direct a spot light toward the feeder so that I can hopefully view them feeding in the evening. It will be cold outside and I will sip hot chocolate as I observe from the inside.

Submitted by Jim Jordan

Environmental tip:

The role of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere can be compared to the role of glass in a greenhouse. The glass lets the sunlight in and the light warms the soil and plants in the greenhouse. These send out heat radiation. When this heat radiation hits the glass, it doesn't pass back through like the sunlight, but is absorbed by the glass. So the glass heats up and this heat goes back into the greenhouse and it gets hotter. This is similar to what greenhouse gases in the atmosphere do. They let the sunlight in, but they don't let the heat radiation from Earth back out into space. For a great detailed article on Greenhouse gases see:

<http://espere.mpch-mainz.mpg.de/documents/pdf/lowerratmosphere.pdf>



Aerating the pond Jim's way!

The picture above taken on January 9, 2008 my method of aerating my pond over the winter.

This is the fourth year I have used this method. An aquarium pump is placed in a styrofoam box and the green silicone type tubing is run through a small PVC pipe to the deepest part of the pond. The hose is weighted and a check valve and small air stone inserted. I put a brick on the box. Last year our young golden retriever walked out on the ice and chewed off the tubing. It went about 10 days without aeration. We did not lose any fish.

Submitted by Jim Jordan

Using Bridges, Benches, & Gazebos in the Water Garden

Ponds, waterfalls, and streams are meant to be seen, heard and even felt for maximum enjoyment. Dipping your hands into the pond or waterfalls or dangling your feet in the cool pond water can be delightful for any age. What better way to encourage that than to add a bridge that spans over the top of the pond or stream, or a gazebo that adds beauty and a little shelter or a bench that cozies up intimately to the water's edge. As a pond builder I am particularly partial to bridges or dock-like decks that reach out over the water using a cantilever design. A bridge can improve pond and stream access and permit much easier interaction with the fish. Nothing beats a cushion tossed out onto the deck while I sprawl out face down staring at my fish that are staring up at me from their dark pond back lit with underwater lights. This is simply pure relaxation.

Anyone can afford the simplest of bridges- stepping stones. If a more elaborate bridge is too much for the budget, you might consider a wildlife crossing bridge. Just walk in the woods where collecting is permitted and look for the right diameter and length and perhaps you'll find a moss-covered character log to span your stream so the squirrels, coons or your pet dog can take a shortcut. If nothing else the log will add beauty if selected properly.

Even if your budget does not permit initial installation of both a pond and any additional structures during the first phase of construction, build