

WILSHIRE GARDEN M A R K E T

August 2004 Newsletter

2821 Wilshire Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73116
(405)879-1121 www.wilshiregardenmarket.com

FOUNTAIN PUMPS DEMYSTIFIED

Gardens seem more beautiful and summer heat seems cooler with the gently splashing sound of water coming from a beautiful fountain. If the gently splashing water slows to a sluggish trickle, makes a grinding noise, or stops altogether, high anxiety sets in. What to do?

Water pumps are relatively simple mechanisms that have very few parts. With proper care, the average pump should last for several years. If a pump is working at all, it is not broken. It could be clogged with mineral deposits, sediment, small pieces of mosquito dunks, leaves, or algae that collect like moss on the filter intake area. If a pump appears to be dead, first check cords and reset buttons on outlets.

The following steps with accompanying photographs will demystify pumps, allowing the owner to feel more confident that water soon will be splashing again.

If possible, remove the pump from the fountain or at least drain the water, unplug the pump, and bring it above the water. Then, remove the cover from end of the pump case.



Once the cover has been removed, pull out the sponge-like filter and rinse clean. With the cap removed, the impeller (fan-like component) is accessible. The impeller

is magnetized, so there will be slight resistance.

Remove the impeller from the pump by hand. If the pump has been performing poorly, it is likely that sediment and mineral deposits will be encrusted around the magnetic cylinder.



Gently rinse the impeller with water and check for rough feeling mineral deposits. If mineral deposits are excessive, soak the impeller for 20 minutes in a 50/50 solution of purified water and C.L.R., available at most grocery and hardware stores. Gentle brushing with a toothbrush is also an option in the cleaning process. With a garden hose or faucet, rinse the inside of the pump to make sure that no particles remain.

Replace the impeller and any other components just as they were removed from the pump. Before assuming that it will work, either submerge the pump in a bucket of water or in the fountain under enough water to cause the pump to work correctly.

If it sounds like the pump is running but little if any water is flowing, tap the pump against the side of the bucket or fountain to kick start the impeller in case it is stuck or to dislodge a small piece of debris that might still be lurking inside.

If the pump still does not work, it may be burned out, and you will need a new one.

Pumps must always be completely covered with water in order to work properly. Water must be clean and free of debris. A small fish net is an excellent tool for removing even minute pieces of debris and sediment.

The water level and quality should be checked daily in hot weather. Small or shallow fountains that are in sunny, windy locations, or that are frequented by many birds, should be turned on primarily only when someone is there to enjoy them.

Just before the weather turns cold, drain the water from the fountain. Remove the decorative finial and use the pump itself to remove most of the water. Use a leaf blower to blow out remaining water. Remove the pump or elevate it to keep it out of potential ice. Try to keep the fountain empty and dry during the winter.

For now, enjoy the cool and soothing sound of gently splashing water!

IT'S TIME FOR A SUMMER SALE!

The New York Gift Market and vacations are enticing us away for a couple of weeks, but first we'll have a short sale! This will be UNADVERTISED and primarily for the benefit of Wilshire Garden Market customers who are on our newsletter and e-mail list.

THE SALE BEGINS MONDAY, AUGUST 2, AND RUNS THROUGH SATURDAY, AUGUST 7.

We will be closed for the next two weeks and will reopen on Monday, August 23, hopefully with news of fabulous finds in NYC.

WATERING IN HOT WEATHER

Being an Oklahoma gardener in August (is that an oxymoron?) is, to say the least, a challenge. The best thing for the garden in August is to keep plants trimmed, fertilized, and properly watered.

What is "properly watered?" It is deep watering, not frequent watering. Water and nutrients are absorbed from the soil by the new growth at the outer ends of the roots. Deep watering allows the water to soak far down into the soil where the roots are. Squirting water over the surface of the soil, even if done every day, will cause roots to seek the water in the top several inches of the soil that dries out quickly, creating a poor growing environment.

In order to understand how and why to water properly, it is important to understand how plants absorb and use water. Water and minerals are drawn up from the soil to the top of the plant by a force similar to that of a drinking straw. Plants keep themselves cool in the summer by "transpiration", a form of evaporation from tiny pores on the underside of leaves. The transpiration rate is determined by temperature, wind, and humidity. Plants need the most water on hot, dry, windy days, which describes Oklahoma's normal August.

In the summer, the best time to water is early morning, before the sun is high in the sky. This allows the water to absorb into the soil, with the least amount of evaporation, allowing for the drops of water that may get on leaves to dry in the breeze. The sun shining through drops of water acts as a magnifying glass and can burn the surface of leaves.

Let the water soak in around the base and perimeter of each plant. A soaker hose can be woven around the base of plants, weeping slowly like a gentle rain.

To determine if the water is being absorbed deeply enough, dig down about five inches. If the soil at five inches is moist, it is being watered enough. If it is bone dry, it needs more water! Fertilize more frequently now because watering causes fertilizers to be leached out of the soil or washed away. Use a time release fertilizer or Miracle Grow every two weeks to add blooming power and needed nutrients.

Adequate water applied correctly is the most important element necessary for a beautiful garden in the summer.

WHAT'S NEW??



Our exclusive high fired terra cotta pots with matching glazed saucers in three graduated sizes by Mike Paluska. Beautiful with their split ruffle

rims, they will make very nice gifts and they will withstand cold temperatures! Watch for an enormous pear and other Paluska creations that will be perfect for outdoor decorating this Fall!

SEMINAR SERIES 2004

Held at Wilshire Garden Market, most seminars begin at 10:30 and last for an hour. The fee is \$10 per person and seating is somewhat limited, so call soon to reserve a seat. Door prizes are given at each seminar! The current 2004 series is as follows. More are being planned. Please join us!

August 27 Discover Your Home's Personality
Sept. 25 Container Gardening
Oct. 28 Plant Partners (Steve Hill)

A beautiful example of Plant Partners (Steve Hill)



PROPAGATE HYDRANGEAS

Hydrangeas are beautiful woodland plants that thrive in shady, moist, well drained soil. Now is the time to prune and fertilize. Hydrangeas bloom on last year's growth, so prune now for next year's flowers.



Pruning will also result in pieces of stems that are suitable for propagating. Hydrangeas are one of the easiest plants to propagate; it can be done from April to August. Items needed include rooting powder, small container of moist soil or sand, and a hydrangea.

- Cut just below a leaf joint on a non-flowering stem of new growth (not green or old wood) that has two or three pairs of leaves.
- Remove the lowest pair of leaves from the bottom of the cutting.
- Dip the stem into water, then into the rooting powder.
- Place stem in a container of moist soil or sand. Keep moist until roots develop; that could take up to 8 weeks.

This is an easy way to share varieties with friends or an inexpensive way to create a large bank of hydrangeas.

WILSHIRE GARDEN MARKET ASKS THE EXPERTS

Always curious about matters horticultural, Wilshire Garden Market begins a series of interviews with local landscape architects, designers, and horticulturists. Look for this feature each month!

Rick Reavis of Horticulture Services based in Edmond begins the series. Mr. Reavis holds a Masters Degree in Horticulture and has been an adjunct professor of Horticulture at OSU OKC.

Q: Have you seen an emerging trend in the projects you have worked on this year?

A: Our clients have less time and therefore are asking us to be the general contractor on all aspects of their exterior work: pools, water features, hard surfaces, lighting, and plant materials.

Q: What are the biggest challenges for a landscape?

A: Maintenance problems from homeowners not knowing proper maintenance techniques; plant material quality and availability are also occasional problems.

Q: How do you go about creating a four season landscape?

A: Choose evergreens for winter and lots of flowering shrubs, perennials, and vines for the other three seasons.

Q: What thoughts go into the plant choices you make?

A: The right plant for the environment or micro climate; the right size plant for the location; color and texture combinations.

Q: Have you found a new favorite annual, perennial, or tree this year?

A: The Blue Atlas Cedar, Indian Hawthorn, Japanese Painted Ferns, and mixed vines on trellises.

Pictured below is a gently flowing creek created at a residence by Horticulture Services. Click here to view their website at www.hortservices.com.



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