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## True Colors

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**power of color** for retail displays  
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## FEATURES



### 8 Viva Italia POND CONSTRUCTION

As the saying goes, sometimes it takes a village. And sometimes that entire village can fit comfortably inside the dining room of an 80-year-old, family-owned Italian restaurant nestled in the rolling hills of the Allegheny Plateau. So when the owners commission you to make a splash at their new outdoor event space, the expectations can come close to walking on water. **Tim Wood** shares the story of how his team integrated boulders, spillway bowls and some one-of-a-kind logs to create a slice of Tuscany in Pennsylvania.



### 13 Wade Through the Muck

For Universal Aquatics in Atlanta, the term "Dirty South" only applies to pro athletes and the music scene. **John Magyar** presents his company's expertise in maximizing time, money and manpower as pond-cleaning season nears. From acclimating your fish to planting your sales seeds, these valuable cleanout tips will help keep the pond water shimmering.

### 17 There's a System for That!

Sometimes winging it isn't the best approach. Trade in your lily pads for some legal pads and start creating written systems to organize and clarify your company's procedures. **Mike Gannon** at Full Service Aquatics explains how ditching word-of-mouth training will not only save you precious time and money, but it will also get your feet wet less often — and on your own terms.



### 21 True Colors COVER STORY

Whether it's in your wheelhouse or not, knowing your way around the color wheel can make the difference between a run-of-the-mill floral display and a visual work of art. **Paula Biles** will take you for a spin with her tips and tricks of the trade that will color you and your customers happy.



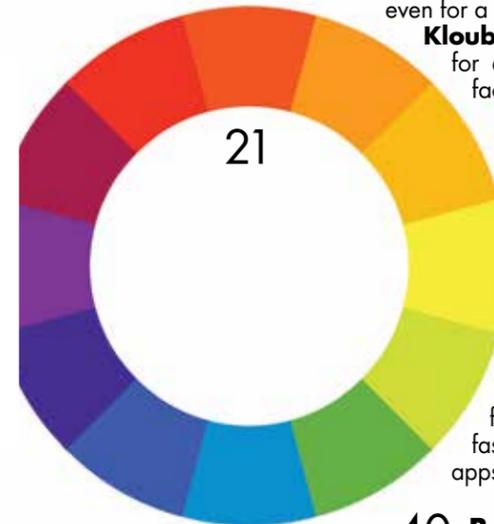
55



51

### 27 Sanke or Showa? LANGUAGE OF KOI

Don't be "koi." Which is it — white and red with black spots, or black and red with white spots? If this question made you hesitate even for a second, look no further than pg. 27. **Ellen Kloubec** will "Showa" you five easy guidelines for quickly telling the difference and saving face with your inquisitive customers.



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### 34 Instagram Your Way to Success

They say that there are plenty of fish in the sea. But that doesn't mean the world shouldn't see what you have to offer. **Brad Caze** is back with a new-school approach for building and expanding your business using social media. Cast a line on Instagram to save time, tackle your fears and reel in new followers on one of the fastest-growing, highest-yielding smartphone apps on the market.

### 40 Building an Insulated Pond

If you can't stand the heat... or the cold for that matter, **Kent Wallace** has a simple solution that won't break the bank or endanger your fish. In an installment in our ongoing series looking at building with Insulated Concrete Forms (ICFs), he shows you how these versatile construction materials can keep your costs low without sacrificing your creative eye for a cutting-edge insulated pond.

### 45 INspiration

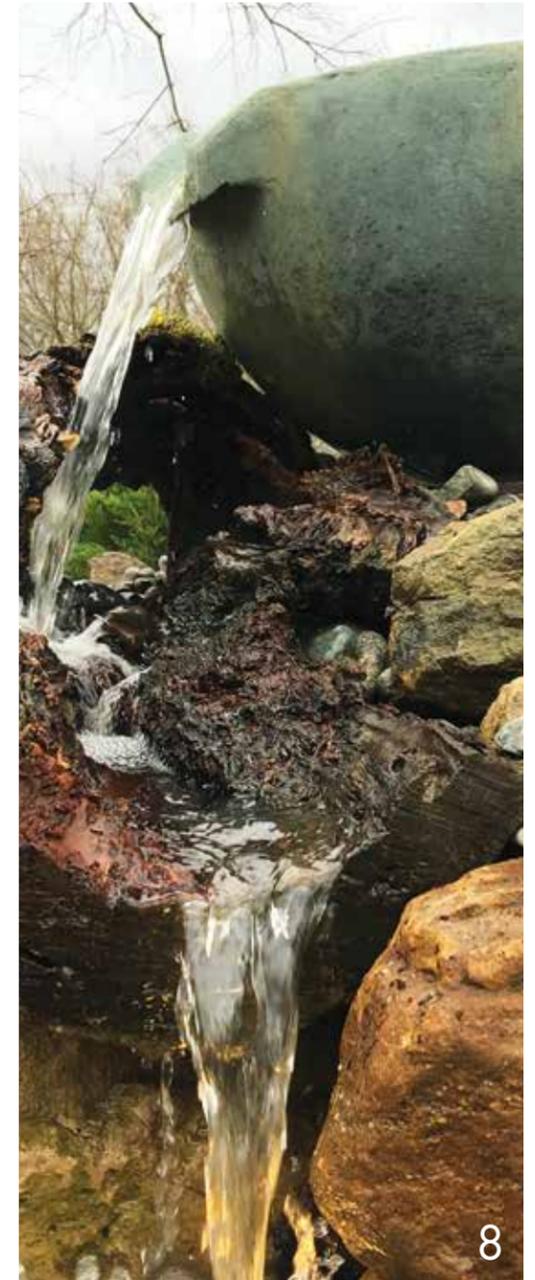
Fasten your seatbelts, because **Freddie Combas** takes you on a whirlwind trip through his mind, navigating a winding road of people and events that have left him INspired over his 17-year career. But whether or not your inspirational story also includes Oprah Winfrey and grape jelly, his words of wisdom and call to seize the day will leave ripples on the surface of your mind.

### 51 Snapchat Savvy

Floundering in your own little puddle? Carping and griping about your communication skills? On pg. 51, **Eric Triplett** dives into the world of Snapchat, which isn't just for teenagers anymore. It's actually the latest mainstream social media frontier, helping you not only bait and lure new customers, but also develop lasting client relationships like you've never had before.

### 55 Don't Forget Plant Shelves!

It may have happened to you before. You've nearly finished installing a new water garden for marginals, and your customer has a "Eureka!" moment — why not include a few water lilies, too? This could pose a major problem, unless you've planned ahead. **Jennifer Zuri** explains how building plant shelves avoids these types of issues and helps you cater to changing conditions and the pickiest of customers... including yourself!



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## DEPARTMENTS

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## COLUMNS

- 7 Publisher's Perspective

# Upcoming Events

2016

**March 5 - 6**

**Koi Club of San Diego  
29th Annual Koi Show**  
Del Mar Fairgrounds  
Del Mar, California  
www.koiclubofsandiego.org

**March 11 - 13**

**Central Florida Koi Show**  
International Palms Resort  
Orlando, Florida  
www.orlandokoiexpo.org

**March 18 - 20**

**42nd ZNA SoCal Koi Show**  
Gardena Civic Center  
Gardena, California  
www.znasocal.org

**April 2-3**

**9th Annual Marine Aquarium Expo  
(MAX)**  
OC Fair & Event Center  
Costa Mesa, California  
www.marineaquariumexpo.com

**August 2 - 4**

**SuperZoo 2016**  
Mandalay Bay Convention Center  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
www.superzoo.org

**August 2 - 4**

**IGC East**  
Valley Forge Casino Resort  
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania  
www.igcshow.com

**August 16 - 18**

**IGC Chicago**  
Navy Pier Festival Hall  
Chicago, Illinois  
www.igcshow.com

**August 24 - 28**

**PONDEMONIUM**  
The Q Center  
St. Charles, Illinois  
www.aquascapeinc.com/pondemonium

**October 19 - 21**

**Hardscapes and GIE+EXPO**  
Kentucky Exposition Center  
Louisville, Kentucky  
www.hardscapena.com  
www.gie-expo.com

**November 2 - 4**

**International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo**  
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
www.poolspapatio.com

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## Publisher's Perspective

### Spring Brings Renewal, Refocus

It's the spring issue, and POND Trade has plants on the brain. Just check out that beautiful cover! That basket of lilies cried out to grace it. Imagine it in your or your client's pond. Plants have such a strong presence in a pond. They're not only visually appealing, but they're also part of the ecosystem.



Our cover story focuses on the importance of plants and colors. A botanist might tell you that the vibrant, and even electrifying colors you're about to see popping up around your yard are merely intended to attract pollinators. But as you and I know, these radiant colors aren't there just for the bees and the beetles.

On Page 21, Paula Biles explains how the deliberate, creative use of colors can also help lure in the most discerning of customers and help keep things abuzz.

I may be jumping ahead here, but we have another great feature article running in the next issue. Sorry to tease you, but you'll have to hang tight. Kelly Billing and Zac DeGarmeaux are co-writing an article on shade plants for the pond. As the weather heats up over the coming months, a little cool shade should come in handy come summer.

As the spring season resurrects the beauty in your gardens and your business, your pond may need a rebirth of its own. After all, it's time for spring cleaning, and on Page 13, John Magyar has some swimmingly good advice for systematically streamlining your annual dirty work. And speaking of systems, chances are you could be using one — or a few — to keep your ducks in a row. Consider Mike Gannon's advice on Page 17 and put down your shovel, pick up a pen and paper and stay out of the trenches as you grow your business this year.

If growth does happen to be on your agenda for 2016, make sure you're well-versed in the ever-changing world of social media. Even if the thought of using a smartphone app sends you reeling, this issue has two articles on the latest trends in these handheld, do-it-yourself marketing platforms. Check out Brad Cazez's simple Instagram how-to guide on Page 34, and before you know it, your entire portfolio will be showcased on the world's stage. You might also be surprised that Snapchat isn't just for taking selfies anymore. On page 51, Eric Triplett shares his experience with using ephemeral photos and videos for networking, staying in touch and the occasional sea-horsing around.

And if you're still yearning for some motivation to kick off your spring, Freddie Combas will leave you some words of "INspiration" (as only he can) on Page 45. He certainly left me smiling and thinking a few moves ahead.

Happy PONDering!



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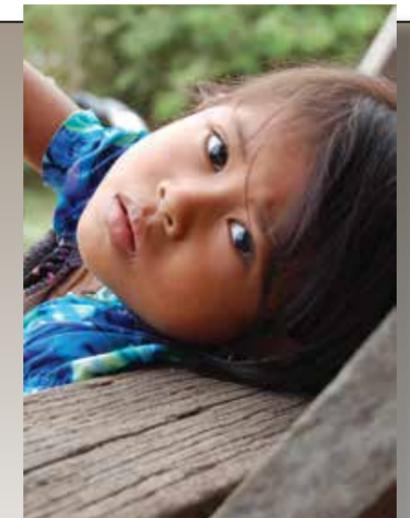
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# Viva Italia!

Laurel Highlands legend gets a boulder taste of Tuscany

**by Tim Wood,**

Tim Wood, Aquatic Edge Pond & Landscape Solutions

Every city has that one restaurant — the local, family-owned joint with home cooking that everybody talks about. You always take your mom there for Mother’s Day, and it’s the go-to place for out-of-town guests seeking a nice, sit-down meal. Even classy high school guys have been known to take their dates there before the Homecoming dance.

Just outside Greensburg, Pennsylvania, is a little town called Crabtree. With a population of about 300, it’s easy to miss. But nestled within the city limits is one of the surrounding area’s most-loved Italian restaurants — Rizzo’s Malabar Inn. Rizzo’s has been owned and operated by the DeFabo family since 1935, when it opened as a quaint bar on the bottom floor of their home. Four generations later, the establishment has grown into an institution, with a 450-seat restaurant and a neighboring banquet hall that holds an additional 250 people. In case you’re not keeping track, their capacity is double the population of the entire town!

I, like seemingly everyone else in the region, have loved this place for quite some time. So it was an honor when they approached me about their soon-to-open outdoor event space. Another contractor had already begun work on the lush landscape beds, a paver walkway, large boulder garden walls and an arbor for wedding ceremonies. All that was missing was a one-of-a-kind water feature, and I was happy to oblige.

## “We Make Sauce, Not Water Features!”

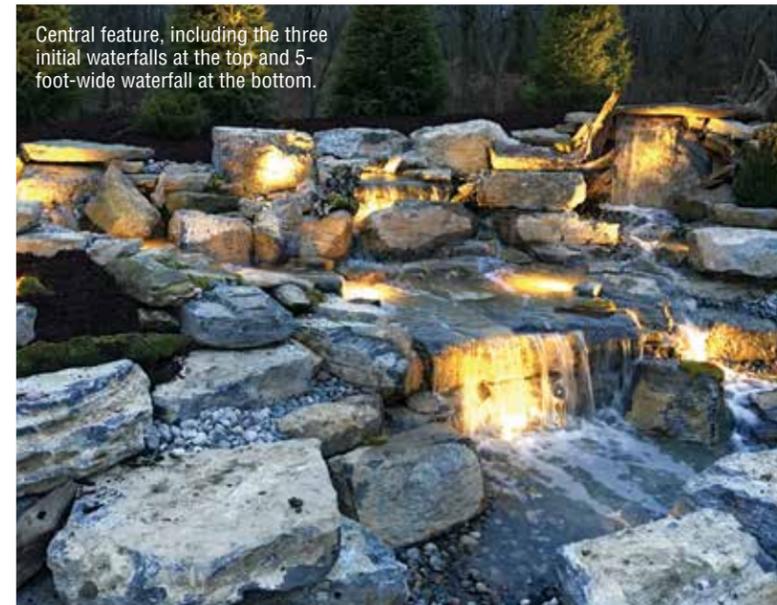
The DeFabo family did not offer a specific vision for the water feature, but their priorities were clear — they wanted it to look great in pictures, stand out at night and be easy to maintain. I believe their bottom line was, “We make sauce, not water features!”

Based on this feedback, I began planning the key elements of the feature.

**Scale.** The space was huge, and thus unfit for a small water feature. For picture-taking purposes, the overall height and width needed to be large enough to serve as a backdrop for large wedding parties.

**Lighting.** We would need plenty of lighting, because most parties — at least the good ones — tend to go strong into the evening hours.

**Pondless.** With low maintenance a top priority for the



Central feature, including the three initial waterfalls at the top and 5-foot-wide waterfall at the bottom.

DeFabos, standing water and fish could not be a part of the plan.

**Style.** The event space was meant to impress at first sight, so no basic design would cut it.

Soon the vision started to form in my head. I saw multiple waterfalls, mossy boulders and logs, and a backdrop of trees. For some extra flair, I decided to add several Aquascape Spillway Bowls to the design, while still adhering to the Italian-Tuscan theme.

Before starting construction, I needed design approval. I tell a lot of my clients that my artistry comes to life with water and rock, not pencil and paper. So when a client like the DeFabos needs help



A mini excavator and a large excavator were required to set the larger boulders.



We constructed a 1,000-gallon reservoir (left) using AquaBlox. Note how we backfilled loose dirt on top of the AquaBlox to achieve a nice contour with the boulders. Five pumps in all were used (above), each one variable-speed and remote-controlled. Every bit of moss was hand-picked and then adhered to the boulders using waterfall foam.



visualizing my design, I turn to the Flipboard smartphone app. Flipboard allows me to quickly and easily create digital magazines and then share them via text or email. In this case, I created a personalized “Rizzo’s Restaurant Design” magazine with pictures of previous work comparable to this particular design. I also included photos of the Aquascape Spillway Bowls and pictures of some colleagues’ projects that incorporated similar design elements (with proper attribution, of course). They loved the concept and the way it was presented, so it was time to get started.

### “Mound” Breaking

We constructed a dirt mound to serve as our canvas. The site had no natural elevation change, so we needed to build the mound in a way that would give us necessary height for a backdrop of waterfalls, while still blending in consistently with the natural scale of the property. Too short would be underwhelming, and too tall would look ridiculously unnatural. The final dimensions of the mound were approximately 6 feet tall by 40 feet long by 20 feet wide.

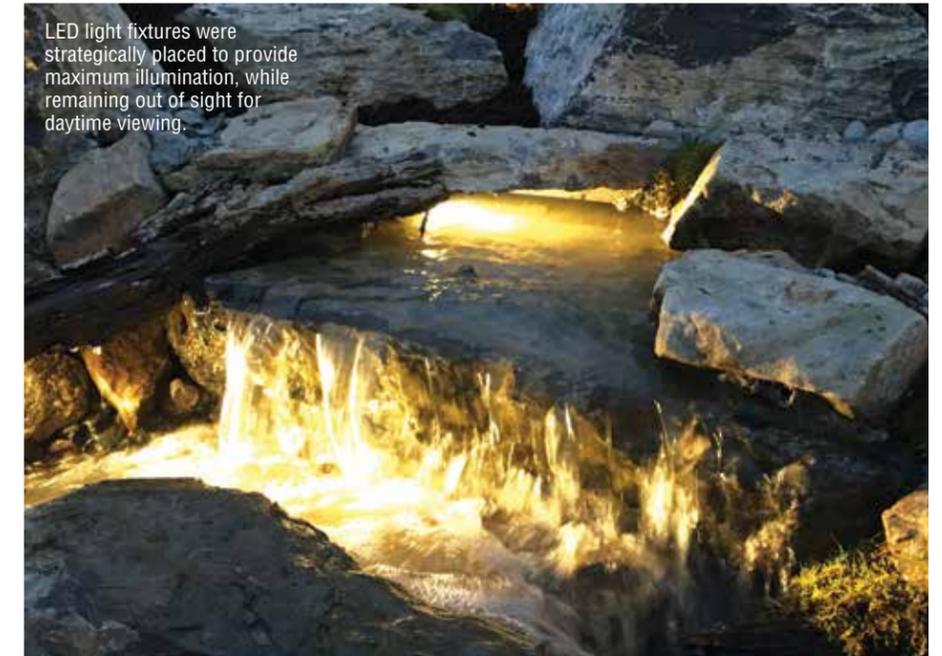
In front of the mound, we constructed an underground reservoir capable of holding about a thousand gallons of water. We lined it with underlayment, followed by a 45 mil EPDM pond liner and second layer of underlayment. Thirty-two large AquaBlox tanks were used, along with three pump vaults with extensions. The pit was backfilled with loose dirt, which was then compacted to keep the AquaBlox in place. We placed boulders along the outer edge in a staggered line to achieve an aesthetically appealing contour. Most of the two-inch flexible Schedule 40 PVC plumbing ran along the back of the mound, except for a single length that ran along the AquaBlox to a spillway bowl at the base of the feature.

The clients had previously acquired a large quantity of beautiful Pennsylvania limestone boulders and had them piled in an adjacent parking lot. Although the close proximity to the work site was convenient, it still posed an additional challenge. Many of the boulders were large, weighing well over a ton. The other contractor on-site, who was in charge of the non-water feature components of the construction, allowed us to use a large excavator to load the boulders onto

a dump truck, drive them across the open lawn, and then dump them onto the ground. It took about 10 trips, so extreme care had to be taken in order to minimize damage to the lawn.

Working with the limestone boulders took some time getting used to, as they were much harder and heavier than the weath-

Luckily, the property was close to a low-lying flood plain. The stream banks were littered with trees, both alive and dead, which provided the perfect habitat for moss. I made several trips with a wheelbarrow to gather moss and interesting-looking logs. We used waterfall foam to adhere the moss to the boulders, which instantly gave them



LED light fixtures were strategically placed to provide maximum illumination, while remaining out of sight for daytime viewing.

ered mountain sandstone we usually use. Although the limestone did not break easily, when it did break, it tended to break off in sharp pieces.

### Building a Slice of Italy for Crabtree

As we all know, there is no way to know exactly how a water feature will look until it's completely finished. This was a large installation with multiple focal points, so I often found myself stepping back and monitoring our progress from multiple vantage points to make sure we were adhering to the overall design. We replaced boulders, manipulated dirt behind the liner and made several other changes along the way as needed.

One major problem was realized quickly, but it was actually easy to overcome with a little creativity. All the boulders looked too clean. Aside from some dirt and mud, there was nothing else on them. After the dirt washed away, the boulders didn't jive with the old Italian-Tuscan theme we were going for. The solution was simple — moss.

an aged look. I also added logs at a higher density than I usually would, adding an older feel. The result was really quite amazing. The feature had a perfect balance of beautiful, crisp character elements in the boulders and mature, organic elements that gave the space an “enchanted ruins” appearance.

The installation of the spillway bowls was saved for last, so we could place them in several different spots for a dry fit before setting them in place permanently. A total of four bowls were installed — two with a spouted style and two with an overflowing style. The first overflowing bowl was placed at the bottom of the feature to provide an interactive element, allowing someone to easily step onto a large boulder and dip a finger into the dancing water. We paired a spillway bowl and the other overflowing bowl together on the far side of the mound to add depth to the overall design and draw spectators further into the experience. These bowls create the illusion that water is spilling onto the ground due to their placement several feet away from the



A close-up of the main waterfall and upper waterfall with 3-foot drop.

waterfalls; in reality, an underground pipe carries the water back into the main 1,000-gallon reservoir.

The final spillway bowl was paired with a hollow log I found on a farm outside Greensburg about a year ago, and together they became my favorite component of the installation. The farm owner was a client of ours and allowed us to remove it, so I rolled the log next to the spillway bowl, and it was love at first sight! We placed the pair on the near side of the mound for

enjoyment from all angles.

### Prepping the Main Course

To finish off the project, we planted 6-foot-tall hemlock trees on the back of the mound to serve as a backdrop. Shrubs were planted around the feature as well, with perennials to be added come spring. Two dozen, three-watt LED lights were used in and around the water. Each spillway bowl had a one-watt LED light plumbed into the bottom interior. A total of five pumps were used: three variable-speed, 4,000-8,000 gph pumps and two variable-speed, 2,000-4,000 gph pumps. The variable-speed pumps provide the option of decreasing or increasing the flow rates, depending on the size and type of party being held.

The DeFabos love their water feature and believe it will help lure clientele to their new outdoor event area when it officially opens in the spring of this year. Personally, I thoroughly enjoyed working on this project, and I believe it will help us sell significantly more water features like it for many years to come. 

### About the Author

**Tim Wood** is a Master Certified Aquascape Contractor and the owner of Aquatic Edge Pond & Landscape Solutions, located in the Greensburg area in western Pennsylvania. Tim specializes in natural-style ecosystem koi ponds and water features.



Tim is also the owner of Aquatic Edge Consulting, a lake management company. He is a member of the Pennsylvania Lake Management Society, the Society of Lake Management Professionals and other organizations associated with lake management. Aquatic Edge Consulting also offers an exclusive, specialty line of natural bacteria products developed specifically for use in lakes and large, earth-bottom ponds.  
[www.AquaticEdgeConsulting.com](http://www.AquaticEdgeConsulting.com)

## Cleanout Tips



# Wade Through the **Muck**

Time-saving pond cleanout tips

by **John Magyar,**  
Universal Aquatics

**T**his is the season to begin another vigorous attack on dirty ponds. Pond cleanout season is quickly approaching, and the team at Universal Aquatics in Atlanta is getting ready for another great one. Here are a few tips to help make the most out of your spring pond-cleaning season.

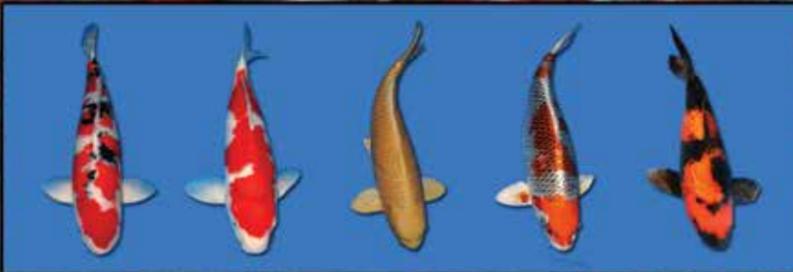
### The Name of the Game: Speed & Efficiency

By maximizing both speed and efficiency, your team will have the ability to service more customers in a shorter time frame. Well-trained team members following set pond-cleaning procedures is a must in order to maximize efficiency. Having the right equipment is also necessary in order to prepare your team for a winning pond cleanout season.

- Start draining the pond immediately.
- Recycle as much healthy pond water as possible. This is a huge time saver. If the pond water is not in good shape and cannot be recycled, start filling your holding tanks with fresh water. Use this water to fill the pond later.
- Always use two hoses from the customer's house if possible while cleaning the system. Two water sources will mean better efficiency.
- Add a Y-splitter on the pressure washer line with 10 to 15 feet of hose. This way, only one water source is tied up, with one person rinsing the pond and the other pressure washing.
- After recycling all the desired pond water and removing all the fish, use the discharge hose from the main cleanout pump to rinse the muck out of the stream, pond walls and filters using high-pressure pond water. The entire system rinses much more quickly that way than with a standard garden hose. Not to mention the bacteria-related benefits!

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## The Basics: Pond Cleanout 101

Remove all water from the pond.

Gently remove the fish and place them into holding containers.

Remove most of the debris from the feature.

Pressure wash the pond, stream and/or waterfall.

Thin out pond plants if necessary.

Clean all filter pads, skimmer and pump(s) as needed.

Check the lighting system.

Check the pump(s) for proper water flow.

Make necessary minor adjustments to any stone that has shifted.

Add water conditioner and bacteria to the newly filling system.

Reintroduce the fish to their new home.

## Supplies You'll Need:

Cleanout pump(s) with 2-inch discharge hose(s)

Garden hoses

Fish-holding tank(s) with net cover

Air pump for fish

Pond vacuum

Shop vacuum

Pressure washer

Wheelbarrow

Buckets

Trash bags

Extension cords

Power strips

Fish nets

Debris/sludge net

Boots/waders

Gloves

Dechlorinator

Bacteria

Filter pads

Upsell items (lights, ionizer, chlorine remover, fish food, algae treatment products, etc.)

■ Collect all the pond debris with fine-mesh fish nets or buckets and place it in wheelbarrows. If possible, distribute the waste around shrubs at the customer's house. Our team makes great efforts not to remove any pond debris from the site.

■ If there is an excess amount of sludge in the pond, it can be diluted and simply pumped out with a heavy-duty pond cleanout pump.

■ When refilling the pond, place the refill lines on a flat stone. Try to avoid placing the refill hose in gravel, if possible. Also, it is helpful to keep the hose in one spot throughout this process. This will keep the gravel from clouding up the water. Our team will stay until small-to-medium ponds are completely refilled. For larger ponds, our customers will typically refill them after we finish, turning on the pump themselves.

■ Divide and conquer. Always multitask, thinking several steps ahead during the cleanout process.

### Acclimating Fish

Fish acclimation takes time, and floating fish for a few minutes in

and repeat three times or so over the course of an hour, and voila — happy, healthy fish. It is no different in the pond world. More recycled, clean pond water means happier and healthier koi and goldfish.



Found a new friend!

### Scheduling Appointments

Scheduling appointments for koi pond cleanouts can be approached in a couple of different ways. If appointments are scheduled when a customer is present, the job may take longer, but the customer can usually fill the pond for you. Plus, you'll have the ability to make an upsell or two. If the customer is not there, you can work much faster, but you may have to stay longer to fill the pond. But, during the time it takes the pond to fill, you can organize your truck and trailer.

### Planting Sales Seeds

Pond cleanout season is one of the best times to plant seeds for future company sales. Take the time to develop ideas and potential plans for upgrades. By spending one-on-one time with your customer in a no-pressure setting, seeds for future sales can be planted. Nothing says, "no pressure" like chatting away pondside, covered in mucky pond scum. Plant those seeds in the spring and watch them grow throughout the season.



Your pond-cleaning arsenal.

a plastic bag simply doesn't cut it. Change is often challenging for most people I know, and fish are no exception. In the professional aquarium world, a general rule of thumb for successful fish acclimation is: half old water, half new water. Rinse

### Building Relationships

In this business, we are nothing without our customers. Spend some extra time with them during this spring season. By just spending a few extra minutes

making conversation with our customers about topics other than "pond talk," we can build relationships that last a lifetime. By developing better, long-lasting relationships with our customers, we can stay in business and count on success in the years ahead.



Divide and conquer, while always multitasking.

### Keys to Success

The key to successful pond cleanouts is to service the pond as quickly and efficiently as possible without sacrificing team safety, quality and overall fish health. Develop what works best for your team and stick

with it. There may be a bit of tweaking that needs to be done throughout the season, but these cleanout tips are sure to save you time and energy as you wade through the muck and sludge to a more efficient pond cleaning program. ☞

### About the Author

**John Magyar**, owner of Universal Aquatics LLC in Atlanta, is a biologist with over 15 years of experience in pond design and installation and maintenance of koi ponds, pondless waterfalls, water gardens and water fountains. His expertise stems from years of work in the zoo and public aquarium industry throughout the United States.

John has worked as a biologist at the Georgia Aquarium, the San Antonio Zoo and the Flint RiverQuarium in Albany, Georgia. Working at public aquariums gave him a chance to care for exotic animals, while developing a truly hands-on approach to designing, creating and maintaining many different types of water features.

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**Building Business**

**There's a System for That!**

Stop building ponds and start building your business

by **Mike Gannon**,  
Full Service Aquatics

Own<sup>O</sup>ning a business that builds amazing ponds and water features is a livelihood that many would love to have. Using your own two hands to artistically place rock and gravel to create waterfalls that make your customers weep with joy is not a bad business to be in. Before long, your company will have built a reputation for great work, and a successful business will have sprung up around you. A successful business brings with it demands for sales, marketing, billing, payroll, scheduling, managing employees, splitting time between the field and the office, customer relations and that thing called "having a life." Things start to overflow! What is a pond builder to do?

**Stop Building Ponds!**

It sounds crazy for a business owner to stop building ponds just when the business of building ponds is really starting to flow. But here's why all pond business owners should put down the shovel, step away from the rocks, stop building ponds and start building their businesses.

One of the least profitable and most expensive job positions that the owner of a pond business can fill is the

lead foreman or head service technician on a pond construction project. Every shovel the owner fills with dirt, every rock the owner places, every skimmer the owner cleans, and every light bulb the owner changes represent missed opportunities for sales, job creation and business growth. When the business owner performs these tasks, money is left on the table, leaving one less job available for a prospective employee. Everyone involved with the business suffers.

"No one can do it like I do it!" "The customers want ME!" These are common thoughts shared by business owners, but they represent a dilemma that traps many owners in the field, keeping them away from the things that will truly make

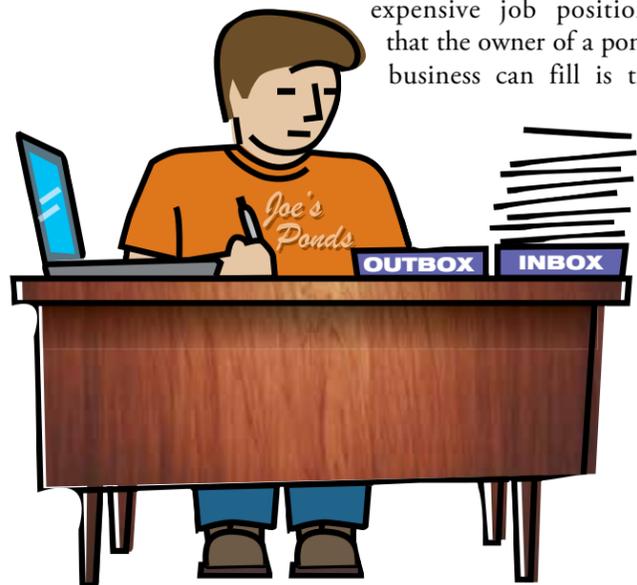
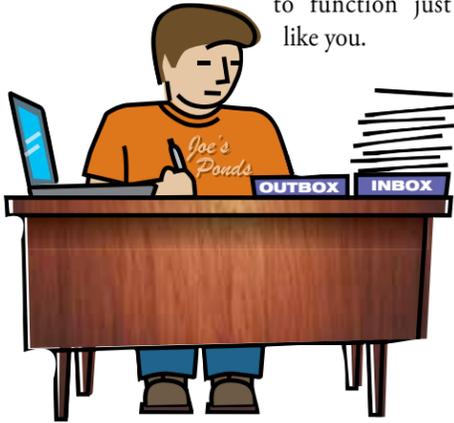


Illustration by Bonnie James

their businesses successful, their employees well paid and their customers even happier. It is a mindset that owners need to shake off.

## Start Building Your Business!

The business owner interested in growing his or her business needs to stop building ponds and start building the business. A major step toward building your business is to create systems for your business. Creating systems is difficult and time consuming, but well worth the effort. Systems will allow your employees to function just like you.



And let's face it — most business owners have tried to train new employees through “word-of-mouth” training, and it is simply not an effective way to train. Word-of-mouth training is often a “one step forward, two steps back” process, which ultimately puts the business owner right back in the field, with shovel in hand. Word-of-mouth just doesn't work and is very open to interpretation, usually evolving into something unrecognizable that is far removed from the business owner's original message. The game of telephone comes to mind. Developed systems could make those issues go away forever by establishing a written set of company standards and procedures.

## What's a System, Anyway?

A system is essentially a written process according to your standards and specifications that can be followed to accomplish specific functions within your business. In other words, systems establish the company standards and specify how to things get done... in writing!

A collection of systems can be considered

a company handbook or a guide about how to do things specifically as you want them done for your company. How nice would it be to have a handbook that describes exactly how you want things done? Systems need to be very detailed — the more detail provided, the better the end result will be for the business owner, the employees and the customers. All parties involved benefit from systems when applied to a business model. Without systems, business owners are just winging it... and winging it is not a sustainable business practice.

## “There's a System for That!”

Systems can be applied to any part of your business. No matter what process you are considering, “there's a system for that.” Systems can be equally effective in field operations and office procedures, not to mention sales, marketing and communications. Just about anything can be systemized, from how a skimmer should be cleaned to how the phone should be answered.

Sophisticated, first-world governments utilize protocol. Successful generals utilize

strategy and tactics. The most successful businesses utilize systems. We are all familiar with the local burger joint and, of course, the McDonald's burger empire. Which do you think is more likely to be systemized? We are not talking about trying to create a major corporation here — it's just clear that businesses that utilize systems will be more successful. In the pond and water garden business, there's always a time to improvise and react, but it's certainly no way to run a business.

## Benefits to Systemizing

There are numerous benefits to written systems. Systems eliminate guesswork and reduce the learning curve, allowing your employees to plug in to your business more easily and train more quickly. Projects will have more predictable outcomes. Systems can make the hiring process clearer, in addition to knowing whom to fire and when. If you're relying on the old “word-of-mouth” practice of passing along of vital company procedures, how can you tell whom is really to blame for poor job performance?

Employees thrive when systems are in place, often exuding more confidence, better organization skills and more accountability for their actions. Turnover is lower in systemized businesses, and seasonal employee retention is higher. Scheduling becomes more streamlined. Forecasting for your business becomes more accurate. Everything becomes more organized. Free time even starts to show up here and there when systems are in place, making that elusive thing called “having a life” finally possible.

Customers can benefit, too. You can

make life much easier for your customers when your business is systemized. They will probably notice and enjoy your systemized daily updates, a semiannual phone call, a monthly email or quarterly flyer. Heck, customers may even pay a little more for the services of a company that appears to have its act together.

All the benefits listed here will make your business more profitable, keeping more money in your pocket than when you find yourself digging holes and hauling stones. Employees of a systemized business tend to make more money, too. A systemized business is also more attractive to potential buyers. When the day comes when you really want to put some money in your pocket, and it comes time to sell your business (You can't build ponds forever, can you?), how nice would it be to hand over a handbook of established systems and company standards to a prospective buyer? Or, would you prefer piecing together how things work just by talking? Established systems will add both tangible and intangible value to your business.

Systems do take time to create, but they are powerful and worth every moment you invest in creating them. Systems force the business owner to look at the business in a much more effective way than the day-to-day winging of whatever happens to come your way. Systemizing allows the business owner to plan ahead for the company and make it happen. As a business owner, you can't see much of the horizon standing at the bottom of a freshly excavated hole in the ground. So, stop building ponds; let your employees build them. You have a business to build! ☞

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## About the Author

**Mike Gannon** is the owner of Full Service Aquatics based in Summit, New Jersey. Mike has been a lifelong pond enthusiast and fishkeeper. Mike began Full Service Aquatics after working as a fish dealer and a stint at the New York Aquarium. FSA has been specializing in pond and water feature design and services since 1995.



Mike is host of The Pond Hunter Radio Broadcast found on iTunes. His Pond Hunter videos can be found on [youtube.com/theponhunter](http://youtube.com/theponhunter), and he is the author of the Love Your Pond blog found on [fullserviceaquatics.com](http://fullserviceaquatics.com).



## Cover Story



**by Paula Biles,**  
About the Lotus

**C**olor is often the focus when people shop for cars, clothes, houses, refrigerators, electronics and, yes — even plants. Color is taught in visual merchandising classes because it is an essential tool. A dedicated industry exists for the study of how to utilize color in product design and display. There are even colors of the year — a Google search for “colors 2016” yields almost 9 billion results!

Plant-related businesses have been slow to incorporate color into their marketing and display strategies. Unfortunately, the water gardening industry remains near the back of the pack. Now is the perfect time to learn about the benefits of applying color to your products, displays and pond designs.

### Color Theory and Harmonies

Sir Isaac Newton did more than discover gravity. He invented the first color wheel around 1700. A modernized version of his wheel is still used to explain and help design color combinations. It is an invaluable tool for artists, designers and marketers around the world, because many aspects of color

are universal. For example, humans, unlike most animals, can see more shades of green than any other color. Color combinations, or color harmonies, start with a key color and integrate other colors in specific positions around the wheel.

The simplest and most visually powerful color harmony is complementary, with two colors from opposite sides of the wheel. Blue/orange, purple/yellow, and red/green are the main combinations. Once you start looking, you will see examples of these pairs everywhere — logos (FedEx, the Denver Broncos), famous paintings (Van Gogh’s “Starry Night”) and even comic strips (the Incredible Hulk’s purple pants). In the aquatic gardening world, one example of the striking impact of complementary colors is a violet water lily with a yellow center.

Split complementary uses the base color plus two colors on each side of the complementary color. This can be seen in a display of a violet iris and red lilies, surrounded by greens.

Complementary and split complementary are by far the most common color combinations; they also happen to be the easiest to apply in our industry’s merchandising and design. Other color harmonies, while also interesting, are more complex and almost impossible to apply using the items typical of our industry.

A puny little concrete pond we stuck in the corner became a focal point because of its contrasting colors. If all blossoms were the same colors, this feature might never be noticed. The color wheel (opposite page) is a circular view of visible colors. Color combinations are based on their relative positions on the wheel. Photos by Paula Biles.

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### Style: Designed vs. Random

Unlike most products, the focus of the aquatic plants we sell and the ponds we create is visual in nature — these are not eaten,

cheting Ping-Pong balls. The latter would show a smaller number of focal points. The moods of each style are also very different — one restless, the other calm.

### Colors can be one of the strongest tools to direct people's vision and create a specific mood.

driven or otherwise consumed. They are meant to last for several years. A backyard pond is a serene retreat and creates a beautiful, peaceful, relaxing oasis worth savoring — the stark opposite of display ponds at botanical gardens and jumbled cottage landscape-style gardens, where many different plants are thrown together.

The objectives of this jam-packed style could be to look random, generate excitement or showcase a wide variety of items. The backyard pond's primary objective is simply to help us unwind, rest and get away from it all. A comparative eye tracking analysis of each would produce two completely different heat maps. The former would show numerous movements, like rico-

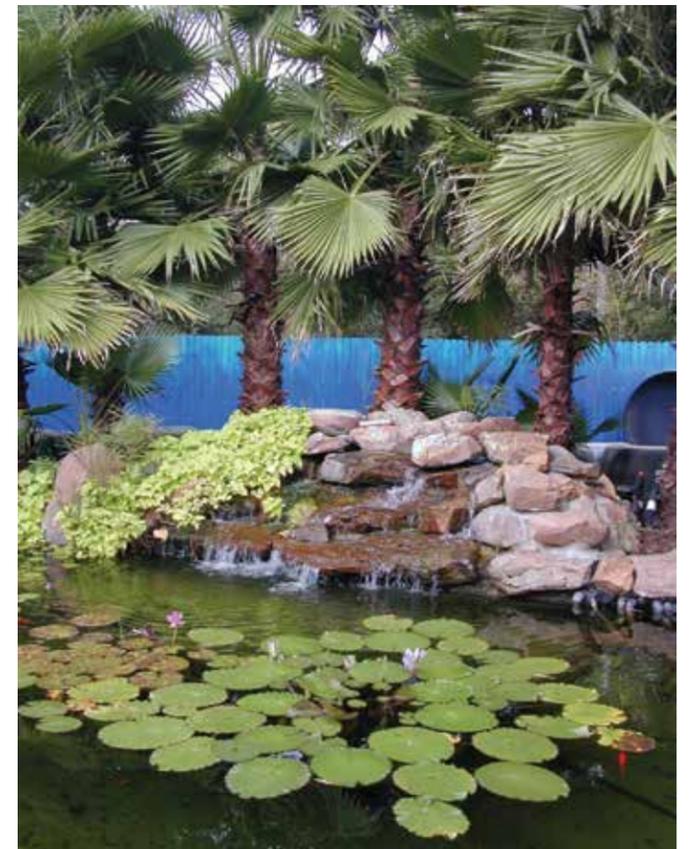
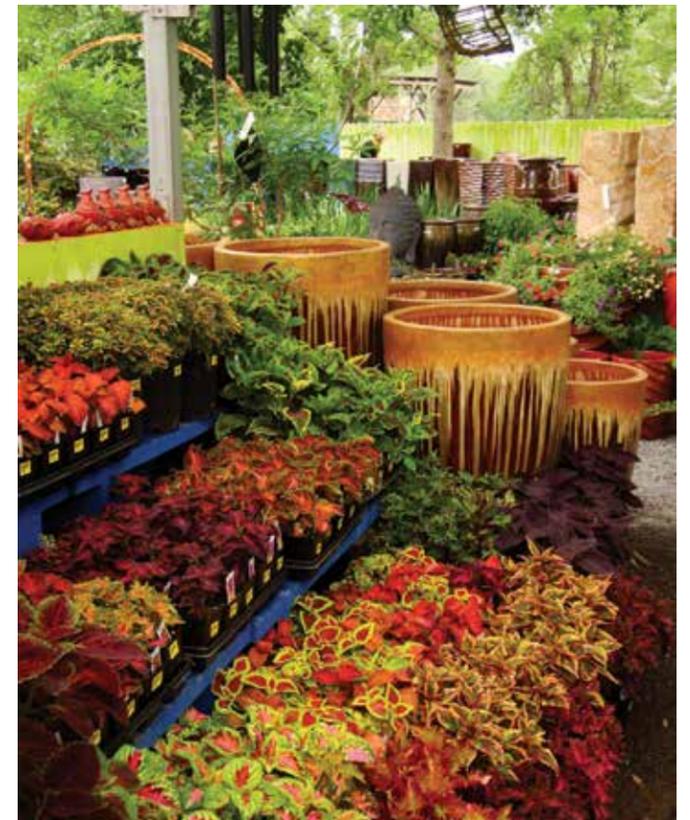
Colors can be one of the strongest tools to direct people's vision and create a specific mood. They are far more powerful than signage in retail applications and can be crucial in pondscaping. Planned use of color can completely change the character and soul of a water installation or a store display. Pay close attention to every colored element you add. Notice the effect each has from afar and up close. Start with a thorough photographic analysis of your current displays or designs, and then ask coworkers and employees for unbiased feedback, both positive and negative.

### Impact: Bits & Blocks

Landscape designers and visual

### Look & Learn

- Search Google images for color visual merchandising, color blocking, garden center color display, etc.
- Cruise Pinterest for these topics.
- Stop by retail department stores to see how and where their displays use color.
- Visit independent garden centers and big box stores to see how they incorporate color into their displays.
- Learn the basic color combinations. Start looking for them in television, print, landscape design, marketing and product displays.
- Collect pond designs with dynamic color combinations. Analyze them and adapt the colors to your future designs.
- Read reviews of sites and apps for selecting colors, designing them to match photos, etc. <http://bit.ly/15ColorTools>
- Soak up everything on the Proven Winners website, from point of purchase materials to color pots and more. Adapt whatever you can.



Visual displays (top) become more effective when colors are grouped together. This is enhanced by the complementary color in the shelves — blue. It's also evident in the blue fence (bottom) behind the pond.



Blue and orange are complementary colors, or opposites on the color wheel. These pairs create striking combinations and are used in everything from logos to stunning pot displays.



Complementary-colored lily groups are spectacular in or out of the pond. Color harmonies are universal, like this stunning display from Bangkok's plant market.



This pond in this calendar photo is so beautiful that I have kept the calendar since 2001. It still reminds me about the power of simple color combinations and mass plantings. Photos such as these are perfect for creating color harmonies.

merchandisers have learned the fundamental importance of color masses, as opposed to spot treatments, to draw attention. Masses help to create a unified and planned design rather than a haphazard arrangement. Landscapes with mass plantings are more likely to be considered the work of professionals, not your average, do-it-yourself fanatic. Using large chunks of color to focus attention is called color blocking.

Color schemes can extend beyond blossom colors in the pond. They can easily incorporate things outside the pond, such as the colored pots used by savvy nursery merchandisers to accent the contents and hopefully increase impulse purchases. Other excellent examples include the foliage of a nearby tree, a ceramic accent piece, blue retail display shelves and a colorful fence behind a pond.

Pond designers use many

components that cannot be altered. Green foliage and the colors of rocks are fixed. Additional color may be added with fish, plants, flowering plants, statuary, accessories and background structures. Consider everything when planning your color combinations. Color masses are even more important, with so many elements competing for visual attention.

Water garden plantings have interesting challenges, too. The seasonal growth cycles require creativity to convey what plants will look like in midsummer. Moreover, while in season it is difficult to keep blooming plants

### Consider everything when planning your color combinations. Color masses are even more important, with so many elements competing for visual attention.

in stock. Consider investing in background banners or photos on metal to create custom color blocks — after all, printing weather-proof media has gotten quicker and cheaper. Each panel could feature a different image for the colors of lilies or lotuses you sell. Imagine a photo backdrop of lilies in a pond filled with blue blossoms. That would make an impact and perhaps even inspire a purchase, even if your plants were not blooming.

### Let the Customer Add Color

Customers aren't always aquatic plant geeks; they often don't know or care about plant names. So consider starting your conversation with visitors to your garden center with questions about what colors they like. It's the perfect way to extract information without being pushy, even if they are only window-shopping.

Use a similar strategy when discussing a new pond project with clients. Ask what their favorite colors are. Do they want to complement the home exterior, complement the colors of other landscaping, or use a college team's colors? Is anyone in the family color-blind? This information is a good starting point before establishing other important considerations of the design.

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This gorgeous backyard makes excellent use of color during the off-season with a simple blue globe. The pink flowers coordinate with the spring tree blossoms and establish a serene, calm mood. Photo courtesy of Kelly Billing.

### Just Do It

Color theory is a fascinating topic and helps explain why some color combinations seem to stand out or appear just right. It can be used to your advantage, helping you sell products and installa-

tions. Learn as much as you can about color, and put it into practice. Establish your color schemes based on appropriate color combinations. Test them with mock-up displays or Photoshop simulations. Announce your upcoming new look on social media and your website. Celebrate your new look. Use it to engage customers, and apply it to make their ponds even better. ☞

### About the Author

**Paula Biles** was diagnosed at an early age with CPO (chronic plant obsession). The constant compulsion to have growing leaves and muddy hands led to an obvious treatment: water gardening.

Paula belongs to the Garden Writers Association and has been a regular columnist for numerous hobbyist and trade publications. Her articles and photographs have appeared countless times in water garden magazines, newspapers, books and online.



## Language of Koi



# Sanke or Showa?

Learn how to tell the difference

by **Ellen Kloubec**,  
Kloubec Koi Farm

Many koi hobbyists love Sanke and Showa — the tri-colored koi that are white, red and black — yet they often struggle to distinguish one variety from the other. I am often asked, “Are they white fish with red and black markings, or black fish with red and white markings? How do I tell the difference?” Also overheard: “What is the rule for black on the koi’s head? Do all Sanke

have white fins?”

There are many similarities between Sanke and Showa. Aside from the fact that both share three colors, both are also non-metallic members of the Gosanke group, produced with Doitsu and Ginrin scale variations. To muddy the waters even more, they can look very much alike at a young age and can take several years to fully finish. So it’s no wonder that most people have a difficult time telling them apart, especially at first glance.

You may even have some of these three-colored koi in your retail tanks and yearn to easily determine which are Sanke, and which are Showa. With so much in common, making the distinction between the two varieties can be quite a challenge. This article will provide five helpful tips in telling Sanke from Showa and make it easier to correctly identify each variety, thus boosting your confidence when it comes to koi knowledge and giving your customers the sound advice they are looking for.



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## 1. The Color Rule

The number of different colors is the first clue to naming the variety correctly. Both Sanke and Showa have three colors — white, red and black. Each color should be vivid and clearly defined on the fish, with an obvious distinction between the colors. Color depth is important, too: it should be a uniform hue, regardless of where it appears on the koi. Each color should appear solid, dense and free of any other color.

### Sanke: White and red with black accents

■ White, or *shiroji* (sheer-row-gee), is the base color on Sanke. It begins at the nose and continues to the tail, including the fins. It should be clean, bright and not discolored in any way.

■ The red on Sanke is called *hi* (he) or *beni* (ben-y) in Japanese. *Beni* tends to be more of an orange shade rather than a true, fire engine red. Sanke usually have large, reddish-orange patches that form the foundation of their color pattern, with the white base generally visible between the patches of *beni*.

■ Black, or *sumi* (sue-me), is the rarest color on Sanke. Generally, Sanke will have black spots, or *sumi* markings, that are relatively small when compared to the prominent *beni* patches. *Sumi* can be thought of as an accent color, while *beni* and *shiroji* are the primary colors on Sanke.

### Showa: Black with red and white accents

■ Showa koi have a thick, *sumi*-dominant base color with a shiny appearance. The black extends along the length of the body and sparsely extends into the fins. The solid black color is of major importance when identifying Showa.

■ *Beni* often appears on Showa in large patches. A strong and dense concentration of red is preferred, ideally on the face, back

and tail section.

■ White pigmented areas intertwine with the *sumi*, breaking up the black background to form interesting patterns.



## 2. Where's the Pattern?

Pattern location is also a clue in determining the correct variety. Sanke and Showa have distinctly different kinds of patterns. Determine if the pattern lies primarily on the back of the fish, or if it wraps around the body. Does it appear mostly above the lateral line, or does the pattern reach down the sides to the belly of the koi?

Sanke patterns usually lie on the back of the koi and are confined above the lateral line. However, *beni* patches may occasionally extend downward, slightly below the lateral line.

Showa, on the other hand, have prominent, heavy patterns that wrap around the fish's body, often extending far beyond the lateral line down to the belly, encompassing the body. When you see a koi with a significant, heavy pattern that encircles the fish, you can bet it's a Showa.

Here's an easy way to remember this

tip: Showa ends with “-wa,” and its patterns wrap around. As a general rule, if there is a “w” in the variety name, keep an eye out for wrapping colors.

## 3. Sumi Accents: Small Spots or Wide Bands?

The size and shape of the black pigment are additional clues to use in accurately identifying each koi variety. When trying to decide if you are looking at Sanke or Showa, evaluate the *sumi* markings.

Small, infrequent or isolated *sumi* spots are indicative of Sanke. The lone, round black spots will appear randomly on the koi's back above the lateral line to accent the *beni* pattern. Individual blotches of *sumi* are one clue to identifying Sanke.

Large swathes or wide bands of black color appear on Showa. The substantial black markings are quite noteworthy — even power-

ful-looking, contrary to the modest *sumi* spots of Sanke. The *sumi* on Showa should be evident the entire length of the fish. *Sumi* bands are often joined together to form interesting shapes, sometimes resembling bolts of lightning. If *sumi* appears as heavy or connecting bands of color, you can be relatively sure you are looking at a Showa.

## 4. Look It in the Face.

The face, or head of the koi will also offer clues to the correct variety. The most obvious difference between the Sanke and Showa is the presence of *sumi* on the head.

Generally, Sanke will have only two colors on its head — white and red, with no *sumi* present. The face should be white, as this is the point where the important *beni* pattern begins.

In contrast, you should see all three colors, including black, on the heads of Showa. Bold Showa patterns begin on the face. In fact,



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*sumi* often starts at the mouth and spreads to the cheeks, possibly even joining with *sumi* on the pectoral fins.

## 5. Examine the pectoral fins.

Generally, the pectoral fins on Sanke will have the same clean, bright, *shiroji* color as its base. White is the dominant color of the pectoral fins; however, a few *sumi* stripes may show up here and there to accentuate the pattern. *Sumi* appearing on only one pectoral fin is not uncommon and perfectly acceptable on Sanke.

Alternatively, *sumi* is often seen on

the pectoral fins of Showa. This feature is called *Motogoro* (mow-toe go-row). Some Showa have *Motogoro* that is a solid block of pigment at the fin joint. Some have *sumi* that flares outward in streaks instead of a single patch that remains close to the body. This trait blends nicely with a bold Showa pattern. However, *Motogoro* is not always present on all Showa.

One special note, *Kindai Showa* (kin-die showa) is a more modern version of Showa. It has predominantly more white areas than a traditional Showa. However, it will still have interlocking bands of *sumi* and *beni*, just like

most Showa.

As a general rule, these are the five things to look for when identifying Sanke or Showa. However, not every koi will exhibit these characteristics. Age, water quality and lineage play significant roles in the development of each of the mentioned traits.

For more information on identification of these and many other varieties, please visit our website at: <http://www.kloubekoi.com/ellens-koi-education/>

## About the Author

**Ellen Kloubec** and her husband Myron began their aquaculture business in 1981, and their farm consists of 80 acres of mud ponds. Together with their son Nick, they raise and supply healthy and hardy koi to wholesale customers throughout the USA and Canada. Ellen loves all things koi.

[www.kloubekoi.com](http://www.kloubekoi.com)



## Sanke Basics

Taisho Sanke is commonly called Sanke. The Sanke is a three-colored, non-metallic koi with a white base with *hi* patches and accenting *sumi* markings. The pigments appear only above the lateral line. *Sumi* stripes may appear in the fins.

## Showa Basics

The Showa, or Showa Sanshoku, is also a three-colored, non-metallic koi, but has a predominantly black body with areas of red and white markings that extend below the lateral line. Showa may have *sumi* at the base of fins and on the head or face. Their colors appear in bands rather than spots.

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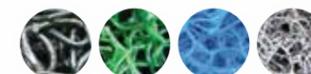
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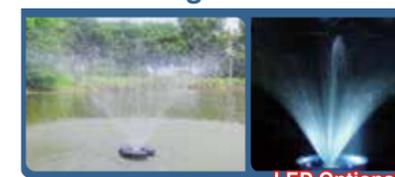


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# Instagram Your Way to Success

How social media can help promote your brand and business

by **Brad Cazee**,  
Cazee Ponds

**S**ocial media has become a major part of our lives. First came Myspace, and then Facebook. Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram soon followed.

If you think that social media is just for kids, you couldn't be more wrong. It's here to stay. If you choose to embrace it, you may be surprised at how simple these platforms can be to help you promote your brand and business. I am not an expert in every platform; I'm more fluent in some than others. My favorite is Instagram. I'm going to show you the basics of navigating the smartphone app and how Instagram can help promote your brand and attract new customers.

## What is Instagram?

Instagram is an app that allows you to post photos and videos to create an online gallery for the world to enjoy. You'll be able to tag friends to notify them that you've posted photos. People who view your photos can click the heart button to show that they love your photo, and they can also leave comments. Instagram is simple to navigate, and yet it's powerful in the way it represents you, your brand and business — all with very little time and effort. This is mainly why it's one of my favorite apps.

## The Basics

At the bottom of the screen are five buttons — Home, Search, Camera/Picture, Activity and Profile.

The Home button shows you the most recent photos from the people you are following. As you can imagine, the more people you are following, the lengthier your feed will be.

The Search button is where you search for top-rated pictures, a specific user, a hashtag or places photos were taken.

The Camera/Picture button allows you to take a new photo

or upload a recent photo from your phone's picture gallery.

The Activity button shows you people who liked your photo, followed you, left a comment or tagged you in a photo.

The Profile button shows your entire photo gallery. Here you can also find how many people you are following and, more importantly, how many people are following you. There is also an "edit profile" tab that allows you to make changes to your profile.

## Maximizing Your Photo Gallery

I can't stress enough how important it is to regularly modify your gallery. When you look at your gallery as a whole, try to stay away from posting pictures or videos of the same color. Mix it up, and try to post a balanced combination of pictures, content with crazy effects, videos... and even selfies. Yes, selfies are important. Some of us hate to have our picture taken — no one is guiltier of this than I — but it's important for your clients to have a face to associate with your brand.

It's important to take not good — but great photos. You don't need to buy the latest camera to do this. With a little practice and today's technology, most smartphones can make you look like a seasoned professional. You can also use lenses that attach to your phone, like the olloclip, for zooming and macro shots. Making sure your pictures are in focus is a no-brainer. The key is composition — the rule of thirds, lighting and, most importantly, creativity. Creativity is crucial in making an average photo great.

Anyone can take a picture of a flower. It's when you take that photo at an unusual angle or under the right light that brings it to life. After you take the photo, make it look even better before you share it! There are many filters within the app that can be applied to enhance your photo, if you choose to do so. Personally, I rarely use the filters Instagram offers and instead prefer to adjust brightness, contrast, and saturation manually within the app. It's quick and easy, allowing me to deliver the great photo I want my followers to see. Most of the time, I'll attach a caption about the content. A brief summary of the content is enough for users to understand exactly what they are looking

at. Occasionally, if the content is especially amazing, no caption is required.

## Pictures in Motion

Videos are also a key part to attracting followers to your gallery. Keep your content focused and interesting. Instagram allows you



This is an example of time-lapse photography, as well as some color enhancements using the editing tools within the Instagram app.

to post videos up to 15 seconds long. You can shoot the video directly from Instagram or import videos you have previously taken. If the videos are longer than 15 seconds, don't worry — you can trim them to create the desired content you wish to share. Adding effects to your video is not only fun, but it's also a great way to direct attention to your video. Effects such as time-lapse and slo-mo are very popular and fun to watch.

## Add Another App or Two

There are some amazing applications out there to make your pictures stand out and get the attention they deserve. Many of them are free!



Example of Framatic. Photo by Ashley Cazee

One of my favorites is Framatic. Framatic gives you a variety of frames and borders to make your photos look more professional. In addition, it allows you to watermark your photo to protect it from theft.

Tangled FX allows you to turn an average photo into something truly amazing. It takes

the most dominant lines in your photo and turns them into radical brushstrokes that you would normally see in abstract artwork.

Flipagram is an application that creates a video from photos you select. You can even add music to the Flipagram video to capture the mood you are trying to convey to your audience.

Repost is an application for Instagram that gives you the ability to repost a picture that another user has posted, giving them full credit for their work. Why would reposting someone else's work be important? Perhaps you are showcasing someone else's work in order to bring attention to both galleries. This is a win-win for both parties.

The name of the game on Instagram is to stay relevant. There are times I simply don't have a photo I want to post to my account, so I'll turn to Repost. It keeps me active, and I'm also drawing attention to another user's account. This, oddly enough, can help you gain followers.

## Harnessing #Hashtags

Hashtags are used in the social media world to help users locate specific topics, photos, people or businesses. Simply put, hashtags act the way billboards and freeway signs do. They guide you to what you are searching for. Add the pound or "hash" sign





This group of photos shows a four-step progression: the original photo (left), applying Tangled FX (top right), using Framatic for borders and the watermark (middle right), and finally adding color enhancements within the Instagram app to make the photo really pop (bottom right).



to the front of a word, and you have a hashtag. For example: #koi. Clicking on this hashtag will show you media from all users who have used this particular hashtag. If I have an amazing photo of a water lily I want everyone to see, it's my job to direct them to that photo by getting creative with the 30 hashtags per post that Instagram allows you. Obviously, I'm going to use #waterlily, but beyond that, this is where creativity pays off. Using additional, clever hashtags with your photo will drive all kinds of traffic to your picture, even users who weren't necessarily looking for you. But now, all of a sudden, they are on your page, looking at your gallery and maybe even commenting, because that picture of yours is great!

Current topics or events in the news can also serve as great hashtags to direct attention to your gallery. Add those hashtags to draw in new users. This is how you market your brand outside your trade. It's easy and effective.

Another trick I'll often use is to only include 29 hashtags. Then I have the flexibility to add a single hashtag at a later date to bring traffic back to an older photo. For example, I posted a picture six months ago, and it attracted a lot of attention at the time. But time passed, and the photo got less and less attention. So, I went back to that picture and added a new hashtag in the comments section, perhaps pertaining to something that was popular or making news. By doing this, I brought that old post back to life

and attracted potential new followers.

### Find Your Followers

It's imperative to be active on a daily basis if you want to gain followers. Do your best to post every day, if you can. If posting daily is too much, aim for every other day or once a week. Have a goal and stick to it. Make sure you are active with your followers. Like



I posted this photo on my account, but it was taken by Jason Steele of Steeles Landscaping. I used the Repost app to showcase his work in my gallery, while giving him full credit for the photo.

and comment on their photos. Respond to and thank others for the comments they leave on your content. Search for hashtags that you are interested in, making it easier for you to leave sincere comments. As you like and comment on others' content, you will find that you slowly but surely gain a respectable following. When looking for people to follow, pay attention to their number of followers, versus the number of people they follow back. There are accounts that have thousands of followers, but they only follow a few hundred people back. Spending time on accounts like these can be a waste of your time. Instead, look for users with a more even "followers versus following" ratio. Chances are, these are the users that will follow you back when you follow them first.

I did some beta testing with POND Trade Magazine's Instagram account to see the most effective way to gain followers, and the results were interesting. Posting pictures without any hashtags received very little activity. The addition of hashtags increased the activity dramatically. I selected

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a number of users to follow without liking or commenting on any of their content, and the number of followers increased about 15 percent. When I performed the same test but

**The great thing about Instagram is, once you've mastered the ins and outs of using it, it doesn't require a lot of time to stay active and relevant.**

also liked three or four photos, the number of followers increased about 23 percent. And if I added a comment on at least one photo, the number of followers jumped 30 percent.

### Just Five Minutes a Day

Like everything else in this world, you will get out of your Instagram what you put into it. If you are not regularly active, you are not going to see much activity. It may take some time to establish your account, but stay with

it, and post a picture every day. The great thing about Instagram is, once you've mastered the ins and outs of using it, it doesn't require a lot of time to stay active and relevant. I'll spend about five minutes every morning, sometimes during a commercial break, posting content. This includes adding a frame, editing color, adding a caption, posting it online to Instagram and linking it to my Facebook and Twitter accounts. Covering all your social media platforms is easy to do and gains the maximum level of exposure. I'll also spend a few moments perusing my account throughout the day to find new followers and check out content posted by the people I'm following. Just five minutes a day is a very cost-effective way to promote your business. It's essentially free advertising — all it costs you is a few minutes. We have gained new business directly from our Instagram account, referred business from Instagram to others in our network and connected with others within our industry, such as artists and realtors. Give it a try! Five minutes a day is an easy way to leave a digital footprint in the social media

world. Show off your talents to connect with customers old and new who want what you have to offer. ☺

## About the Author

**Brad Cazez**, co-owner of Cazez Ponds, is an avid outdoorsman who has enjoyed hiking, hunting and fishing since he was a young boy.



Being outside is where he feels most comfortable, and it has allowed him to be a budding photographer. Brad and his family have had fish tanks for years and eventually transferred that love from fish tanks to koi ponds. They are currently fulfilling the prophecy that the average pond owner will build three ponds to finally get the pond of their dreams. He applies his experience in the outdoors and nature in his construction style and technique.

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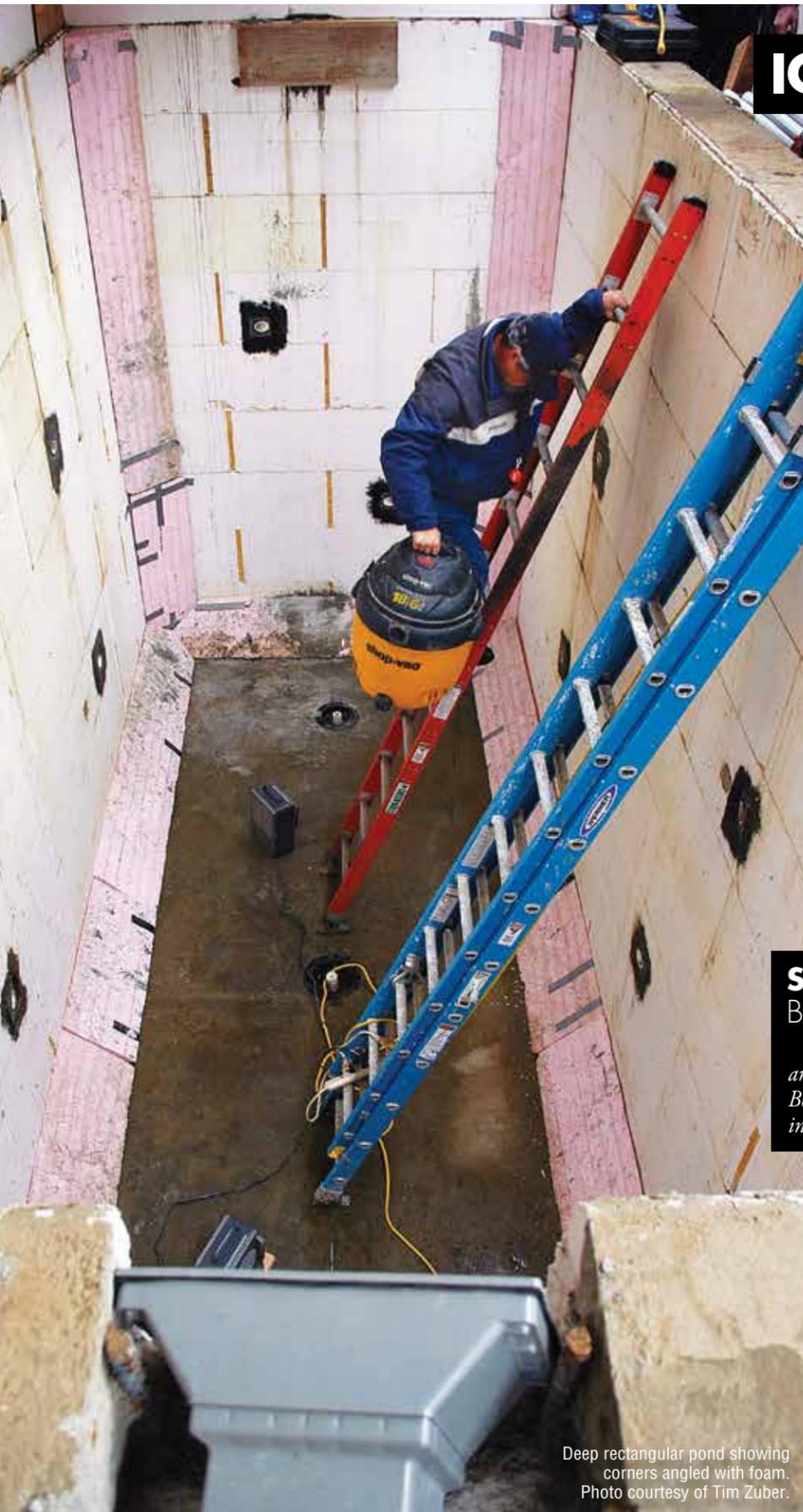
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by **Kent Wallace**,  
Living Water Solutions

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### SERIES: Best Pond Practices

*This is an installment of an ongoing, multi-part series. Be sure to watch for further installments in future issues!*

There are many ponds around the world that are built with insulation between the liner or shell and the surrounding soil to help keep the water temperature a little higher or a little lower than it would be naturally.

Some koi hobbyists in cold climates move their fish indoors for the winter and keep them in quarantine until the pond can support them again in the spring. When I was in Dubai a few years ago as a consultant, it became immediately apparent to me that the high ground and air temperatures in the summer months made koi-keeping difficult. In both of these extreme situations, an insulated pond can help stabilize the water temperature without breaking the

Deep rectangular pond showing corners angled with foam. Photo courtesy of Tim Zuber.

bank. Attempting to heat an outdoor, open-air pond in a cold climate can be extremely expensive, as can cooling a pond with chillers in a warm climate.

### Insulated Concrete Forms (ICFs)

If you're looking to construct an insulated pond wall with excellent structural integrity, my favorite choice has come to be Insulated Concrete Forms, or ICFs. Think

**If you're looking to construct an insulated pond wall with excellent structural integrity, my favorite choice has come to be Insulated Concrete Forms, or ICFs.**

giant Lego blocks made of foam with hollow centers. These are perfect for wall construction in buildings, coming in a variety of shapes and sizes from a multitude of manufacturers to fit every aspect of construction. Even curves and circles are available.

If I ever build another home from scratch, it will be with ICFs. After stacking and positioning the blocks, make sure to clip the rebar in place with mounts made into the blocks, and then pour concrete into the centers. This creates a double-foam, concrete wall with a very high level of insulation, or R-value.

Flanged penetrations, such as skimmers, midwater drains and returns, are treated just as they would in any other pond. The floor is usually concrete, but you can use a dirt center with blocks set on a foundation ring as well. The floor doesn't necessarily have to be insulated if it's below the frost line. Depending on the depth of the pond, the warmer earth below the frost line can transmit the necessary heat into the water through the liner in a cold climate, while having an opposite cooling effect in a hot climate.

Sequential photos at right of a curved ICF block for a round pond with a sheet of foam over the surface to smooth out the shapes. Photos courtesy of Tranquil Water Gardens.

### Construction is Simple

Once the floor or foundation ring shape has been formed and poured and rebar has been set up along the perimeter, the first course of blocks can be set. Subsequent courses can be stacked and locked together with the interlocking block forms. Wherever a penetration is necessary, a pipe and flanged connector can be installed as you stack. Insert the skimmer into the

top row, just as you would for a block wall, shotcrete or gunite pond. The rebar should be clipped in place for each row as you stack.

Once the blocks are stacked and the walls are up, pour the center space with a concrete slurry, just as you would when filling block walls. However, depending on the surrounding soil type and structure, you don't necessarily have to pour the center with concrete. You aren't building a structure that has to support a roof or second-story floor, which is what these blocks are made for. Some options include filling the centers with pourable foam, pea gravel or sand. Pourable foam makes for a very strong structure and greatly increases the insulation factor. Any time the wall is not completely filled with concrete, it is important to lightly cover the bottom row to lock it against the floor. After the wall is filled to within a foot of the top, pour about a foot or so below the top edge to create an upper concrete collar, increasing the structural integrity and serving as a platform for adhering the top cap in whatever form it takes. The upper blocks can also be



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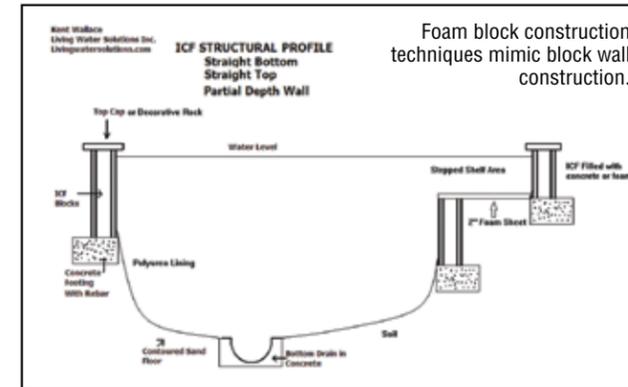
offset, creating an upper ledge for placement of plant material, boulders or rock.

from the floor to the wall. Or, a piece of foam cut on a 45-degree angle can be glued

foam can be glued to an entire surface if the curves leave a blocky appearance.

My favorite liner for foam block construction, of course, is polyurea. Most types of ICFs accept polyurea very well, and when combined, they can form a formidable structure. Paul Parszik of Artisan Aquatics, Norm Walsh of Bridgeway Koi and I have built two show/quarantine tanks of ICF and polyurea that are lightweight, portable and virtually indestructible.

ICF construction doesn't have to be limited to building for insulation. The structural integrity and ease of building can be utilized any time you find yourself building with block wall or poured concrete. After all, ICFs are the form! ☞



### Get Creative with ICFs

Working with foam blocks is very easy and allows you to achieve virtually any shape you want. For example, some blocks are made with an angled shoulder, which can be placed as a transition

in to make the floor-to-wall transition, thus eliminating the hard corner. Once the structure is finished and ready for liner, use spray foam or urethane sealant to clean up any joints or connections that might show through the liner in an unsightly manner. A thin sheet of one-half-inch

### About the Author

**Kent Wallace** was born and raised in Las Vegas. Kent spent most of his adult life in the automobile industry at independent shops and dealerships, including his own shop as a race car fabricator at age 24. Then, in 2001 a neighbor asked Kent if he could build her a koi pond like the one Kent's father had.



From that point on, pond building became his new passion. That first pond he built was submitted to Better Homes & Gardens magazine and won Best Courtyard Nationwide in their special interest publication.

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**Pond** Inspiration

# INspiration

How to stay motivated in a world of Oprah, jelly and ADD

**/inspi'reiʃ(ə)n/**  
*noun*

1. the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative.

**by Freddie Combas,**  
FWG Designs

**T**o start on a positive note, I do not agree with this Oxford Dictionary definition. No, this is not going to be an Oprah-like article, and Dr. Deepak Chopra will not be mentioned in it (other than just now).

It is definitely not a “really nice ponds inspire

me” type of article, either. This is INspiration as seen through the eyes of yours truly, a water feature builder with attention deficit disorder. The reason both the “I” and the “N” are capitalized is because, to me, the true definition of inspiration is:

“An emotional response to a fleeting opportunity within a very specific and definite point in time, that moves one to take action that does some good in the process.” — Freddie Combas, 2016 AD(D)

Case in point, have you ever sat on the couch with



your significant other watching something about some person going to another country, and it changed the lives of millions? At by something, action has to be taken in that specific moment, or life will get in the way. A truly inspired person will pick up the

**To be truly inspired by something, action has to be taken in that specific moment, or life will get in the way.**

the completion of the show (or movie, documentary, Oprah's Inspirational Sunday show, etc.) your significant other turns to you and says, "Wow! That was so amazing and inspirational!" Then the next phrase you hear before the credits finish scrolling is, "Do you want a turkey or ham sandwich?"

Needless to say, the inspiration didn't stick. To be truly inspired

"Did I quote it right? Did I forget something? What if.....?" I was INspired to push through dangling self-doubt on my first project outside the United States.

phone and donate to a charity, and then go to Expedia and book a trip to a mosquito and malaria-infested region to act upon that inspiration.

**So what INspires me?**

I have been here. I've been there. I've built this type of pond. I've built that type of pond. I've traveled the United States and abroad building water features. I



"The Unknown:" We dug a 55-foot by 65-foot pond, and by the next morning, the ground water had filled up the hole. We had to design an underliner gravity drainage system on the fly. Would it work as designed? That was 13 years ago, and it is still allowing water to continuously seep from under the liner.

had thought my main sources of inspiration were water features that were unknown or new to me — the never-before-seen types of water features. I thought I had been inspired when I'd see something that made me step back and say, "I want to build one of those!" or "What if we take that and do this and that to it?" or "Dude! I was about to split an atom and I had this idea..." (Just making sure you are still reading.)

I would then obsessively perform research, analyze it, look for glitches, work through all the scenarios (good and the bad) and finally, to my wife's dismay, I would go out and sell one of these unknown, new, never-before-seen water features. I am laughing right now as I write this, remembering some of the faces that my construction crew of more than 13 years have made throughout the years. They would say, "We're going to do what?!" (Yes, that is an exclamation point after the question mark — not a typo.) Now, they just say, "Cool!" and add their thoughts about the design's



"The Crew:" In 2012, Gil (left, who has since lost 100 pounds), Mervin (middle) and I (right) were INspired to donate our time and labor to build a water feature for the second-oldest church in the Bahamas. Thanks to Art Hantla from ShinMaywa Pumps & John Olsen from Graystone Creations for their donations.

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My younger two of four kids (left): INspired to be better a version of me? The jury is still out! Tony Sargeant (right) INspired me to revamp the business model of Florida Water Gardens, Inc. into the new, mean and lean FWG Designs, LLC.

aesthetics, structural integrity and construction technique.

One day I was going over one of these new, never-done-before types of designs in my head, and I started to think about my crew and what they would be trying

to add to my design. It's always plus if I can stay one step ahead of them and be able to say, "I already thought of that." This led me to realize that we had created a company culture with an all-for-one and one-for-all mindset.

So one has to ask, did I inspire them, or did they inspire me? Hmm, hold that thought...

Do you want to be inspired to create positive change? Or, do you want to be an inspiration to others so they can make positive

changes? Does one lead to the other? I don't know; I'm not Dr. Phil. But I can tell you that I've been lucky enough to have been on both sides of that coin. I have had a few contractors through the years tell me that a photo of our work, an article I had written or a seminar I had given had inspired them to do new things — specifically, looking at water features and the business of water features in new ways.

### IN and Out of a Jam

Many years ago I was aggressively expanding my business in hopes of making it one of the biggest, "baddest" water feature construction companies in the country. I remember my pond-building buddy, Tony Sargeant, telling me to slow down and to enjoy the view, or I was going to have a heart attack. I didn't

understand his one-man operational approach to success, and I didn't have the time to think or hear about it.

Oops! I just dropped jelly on my laptop. Where was I? So Oprah and Dr. Phil are discussing breakfast recipes... no, that wasn't it.

Oh yeah — so a short time later, the economy crashed in the middle of my expansion efforts, and I was trying to figure out what was going to be my next move. In the middle of my quandary, I remembered my conversation with Tony. He INspired me to change course into the business of the unknown — the new and the never done before.

I am glad to say that I have not had a heart attack... yet. Those few, short words he spoke to me many years ago not only INspired me, but also had a huge impact on both my future business and personal life.

### The Most INspirational Man in the World

Throughout my life I have been inspired in different ways by both people and events. My children inspire me to be a better dad. My crew inspires me to think farther and farther outside the box. Awesome sunrises and sunsets inspire me to take time for the important people in my life. Lack of inspiration will cause a lack of action, and the lack of action will create stagnation, leading to death in your business life and boredom in your personal life.

As for me, I do like really nice ponds. My wife puts on Oprah's Inspirational Sundays, which are actually pretty cool. I like grape jelly, and I think that you should strive to be INspired to INspire. The Dos XX guy would agree with me in saying, "Stay INspired, my friends." ☞

### About the Author

**Freddie Combas** has 17 years of experience designing and building water features (43 total years of experience when you count Gil Soto and Mervin Rodriguez, who have been with Freddie every step of the way for 13 years!). A founding member of the IPPCA, Freddie's awards include: Top Gun (IPPCA), Top Frog (Aquascape Designs), First Place at the World Wide Waterfall Competition (IPPCA), Best of Orlando (Orlando Magazine) and others. He has been featured multiple times on Disney's HGTV show, "My Yard Goes Disney," as well as in national publications such as Florida Design Magazine, Home Renovation, PondsUSA, Aquascaper, Ponds Magazine and Water Garden News.

Freddie's national and international water feature projects have been built as far away as Slovakia. His company's offerings include custom water feature and filtration consulting, design, construction, renovation, repair and maintenance.

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Snapchat



Snapchat  
Savvy

Seven ways the ghost will keep your business from dying

by Eric Triplett,  
The Pond Digger

I know exactly what you're thinking. "Eric, you're being completely ridiculous and a little creepy, because Snapchat is for 13-year-old girls! Don't you know?" Admittedly, I poked, prodded, teased and ridiculed a young pond builder in his 20s by the name of Eric Twigg from Aquatic Sphere Construction back in 2013 about his love for the Snapchat Ghost. Today, I eat crow. Allow me to explain how I use Snapchat on a daily basis to engage my clients, family, personal friends and a community of people who are passionate about ponds. What started as a racy smartphone app for teenagers back in 2011, is set to explode onto the scene in 2016.

During the 2014 Water Garden Expo, I started communicating almost daily with a group of Helix Nation pond guys from all corners of the country using the app. Sometimes I feel like I'm more familiar with their faces than I am with my own mother's, because I see them face-to-face via Snapchat almost every single day. I've been dabbling with Snapchat since 2012, but I have to tell you about the day it blew my mind, when I truly began to understand the magic behind

Reach Out & Touch Someone

We have clients across the country, and Snapchat allows me to stay up-close and personal with them in a way that is much more intimate than a phone call or text could ever be. I see some of my clients daily, and they happen to live



Snapchat. When I met up with these same guys again at the 2015 Water Garden Expo, it felt as though I had just seen them the day before.



At the same expo, I met with pond guys and gals with whom I hadn't "snapped" during our time apart, and I sensed an emotional distance that time had created between us.

The difference between my connection with those I was snapping and those I wasn't snapping was — in a word — heavy!

### Easier than Texting

When you have 15 seconds at a stoplight, and you want to remind a recent customer to add bacteria to his pond, send a quick snap. It's so fast and easy, you can repeat it again

to do it? Of course you would! And your clients will want it, too. Talk about customer loyalty — they will be astonished that you found the time in your busy schedule to think of them, and they will love you for it!

### 7 Snapchat Tips

- Your Snapchat avatar is your own personal QR Code.
- Ephemeral photo and video sharing. Content self-destructs in 24 hours.
- Snap your loyal customers like friends, not customers!
- Storytelling is scientifically proven to boost sales.
- Load seven videos & seven photos to your story daily!
- Share your Snapchat username on all your social media platforms
- Search "How to Use Snapchat" on YouTube. Watch 10 videos!

and again for your all of your customers who are constantly glued to their smartphones.

Imagine if your doctor offered to snap you daily to take your vitamins in the morning. Would you want him

### No Tone Is Lost

People often complain they can't understand the tone of a text. Was that a joke? Was he serious? Was that sarcastic? Who knows? In Snapchat, it's all



you, baby! They'll get you, loud and clear. A short video can convey your intended tone by facial expression, a certain look, a smile (or frown) or other body language. There's simply no room for confusion with Snapchat.

### Tell a Story

When I'm having one of those epic days that I dig sharing, I can involve my clients by putting content on the "My Story" feature. They can review my story at their leisure and see snippets of my day, showing them the highlights that apply to them.



If I'm doing a build that a pending client is interested in, I can send them snaps throughout the process, showing them exactly what I'll be doing in their yard while I'm doing it in someone else's.

Statistics show that 90 percent of your Snapchat followers will open your story, as opposed to the 25 percent of your mailing list who will open your emails, on average.

### Behind the Scenes

If you are filming content for a video, you can send quick, behind-the-scenes videos to clients who are itching for more. I put my Snapchat name on my Facebook,

Instagram, and other social media sites for my fans and clients to follow.

Followers and fans can be unbelievably happy when you send them an update on a new video in their favorite video series.

I recently connected with an up-and-coming goldfish expert. We took a field trip to his facility to shoot some YouTube videos, and throughout the day, I kept many of my loyal

YouTube followers up-to-date with exclusive, behind-the-scenes secrets and fun on Snapchat.

### Staying on the Cutting Edge

When it first came out, many people thought Snapchat was merely a way for teenagers to create racy content that left no evidence — after the video is watched, it's gone forever.

However, as more adults are joining Snapchat and learning the benefits of the

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personal and business connections it creates, it has become an exciting, new social media site, shedding its former bad reputation and becoming cutting-edge.

There is a massive audience of people between the ages of 24 and 40 using Snapchat, and 71 percent are millennials under the age of 34. With 100 million active users uploading 800 million photos and videos daily, this platform has secured the most focused attention of the masses during the past decade, even compared to Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Periscope and YouTube.

### Immediate, Live Response

Got a pertinent question that you need answered, right now? You'd love to FaceTime with your employee, but he has an Android, and you have an iPhone. Snapchat solves this issue with a new, live-talking feature.

During the snap, if the camera in the upper right corner is blue, you can touch and hold it to start a live video conversation via Snapchat. Ain't technology grand!

To be completely transparent, I do have friends on Snapchat to whom I send rambling, ridiculous (sometimes alcohol-influenced) snaps on late weekend nights. Celebrating your favorite football team's close-call playoff victory with a close personal friend 500 miles away by screaming and dancing on Snapchat can be a ton of fun!

### Looking Ahead: Ghost or Die

We are all familiar with the phrase, "If you are not growing, you are dying."

This has never been more true than it is in social media today. The number of people who are exposed to advertising via radio, print media and television is declining more quickly than ever. Social media has made these former "Kings of Media" irrelevant.

My oldest daughter is 28 years old and never listens to the radio, watches TV or reads a newspaper. The new generation of buyers in the marketplace simply cannot be influenced by these old platforms. If you want to compete in the marketplace with the big boys, you need to "skate to where

the puck is going." It's headed to Snapchat. Don't die — grow! ☞

### About the Author

**Eric Triplett** owns and operates The Pond Digger Inc. Waterscape Design and Construction Company, based in Yucaipa, California. With a focus on information, education and inspiration, it's easy to see why he has more than 13 million views on YouTube. The Pond Digger specializes in ecologically friendly, low-maintenance waterscapes for fish and aquatic plants ... but more importantly, for people.  
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## Pond Shelves



Remember to add plant shelves (left) when digging the pond. Potted aquatic plants (right) sit nicely on shelves and help naturalize the pond.

## Don't Forget Plant Shelves!

A simple trick for planning ahead in pond construction

by Jennifer Zuri,  
Aquascape

Whether you're installing a small residential water garden or a large commercial pond, the key to producing one that is both natural-looking and easy to plant is largely determined by how you design the excavation.

That may seem obvious, but building a top-notch pond really does call for planning and excavating in such a way that you can accommodate the needs of a variety of aquatic plants at the various depths they require to thrive. If you wait to think about the plants until after the pond is installed, you've missed your chance to get things right.

### A Three-tiered Approach

This doesn't mean you need to think ahead about individual plants and specific locations. Instead, think

in terms of broad shelves that encompass the ideal water depths for the ranges of plants you want to include.

■ Marginals, for example, require a water depth from 1 to 12 inches, depending on the type of plant.

**If you plan your pond knowing what specific plants you want and the specific depths they require, carving out shelves for them is a straightforward proposition.**

In general, however, we recommend setting a shelf at 10 inches to take care of most plants in this category.

■ Water lilies thrive in between 12 and 36 inches of water. You can't go shallower: even hardy water lilies planted in less than 12 inches of water may not survive over the winter.

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■ Oxygenators (including anacharis, hornwort or cabomba) also prefer being planted in 12 to 36 inches of water.

The important point here is

**By altering depths in different areas, you create opportunities for both visual and biological variety within your ponds.**

that different plants and plant types have different requirements. If you plan your pond knowing what specific plants you want and the specific depths they require, carving out shelves for them is a straightforward proposition.

By altering depths in different areas, you create oppor-

tunities for both visual and biological variety within your ponds. And remember, just because you've set up a shelf doesn't mean you need to plant it. The importance of planning

— especially excavating with a plan — is that you're giving yourself flexibility in your ultimate planting decisions.

**Width Drives Space**

As you map things out, remember that the width of the shelves is critical to determining how much space you actually

Adding plants to shelves helps soften the rocks and provides visual focal points in the water garden.

have for plants.

Think of these shelves in the same way landscape designers think of foundation plantings around houses: if you come just two feet away from the house with the planting bed, the selection of perennials, annuals and shrubs will be severely restricted as they grow. But take that same planting strip and add some bends and curves that allow the bed to come out a few more feet in certain areas, and you've created the flexibility for a whole new range of plants — and maybe even a tree.

The same basic principle holds true when you're designing and planting a pond. Unfortunately, most guidebooks on pond construction will demonstrate how it's done with a kidney- or figure-eight-shaped pond with a strip of shelves that extend about 18 inches inside the edge. While such a design is adequate, it's also a bit dull. The uniform shelves have a formal look and seem rather unnatural. What's worse, they don't allow for proper

planting spaces.

Instead, try varying the shelf width, maybe increasing it to three feet along portions of the far side of the pond. This will provide space for a wide variety of plants at the margin and will give you the option of setting up what can seem like a wetland edge.

**Location, Location, Location**

As you plan, always keep primary viewing locations in mind. Excavating a wide marginal shelf along the far side of the pond will allow you to plant a dense selection of tall aquatic plants and create a natural-looking background. Then, put a narrower shelf on the near side and plant it with shorter plants. This will keep the best viewing angles open.

Also, you might consider eliminating a portion of the near-side planting area altogether. Instead, create an edge where the pond meets up with a hardscape or formal viewing area. Providing a deeper section of

plant-free water here will allow fish to come to the side of the pond and greet the owner for feeding.

Aquatic plants will go a long way in beautifying a pond and tying it into its surrounding landscape. Your mission is to figure out ways to use them to best effect, and planning with shelves is the key to making it happen! ☞

**About the Author**

Jennifer Zuri is a marketing communications manager at Aquascape, Inc. She is the author of "The Pond Builder's Guide to Break



Even" and co-authored "Container Water Gardening for Hobbyists."

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**Aquascape Sets Date For Pondemonium® 2016, August 24th – 28th**

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“Pondemonium® is the perfect opportunity to learn best practices for building, selling and retailing water features,” said Greg Wittstock, founder and CEO of Aquascape, Inc. “In addition to hands-on construction and classroom training sessions, plenty of networking events are available each day.”

Pond construction, business and marketing seminars, new product showcases, pond tours, and a special awards ceremony complete the list of events for attendees. Pondemonium® 2016 offers training and entertainment for everyone, whether you’re just getting started with water features or have numerous years of experience under your belt.

To learn more about Pondemonium®, log onto [www.pondemonium.com](http://www.pondemonium.com). For more information about the Q Center, visit [www.qcenter.com](http://www.qcenter.com).

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**POND Trade Welcomes New Editor**

This year, one of POND Trade’s fish will be swimming in a new pond. Our editor, Peter Celauro, has accepted a new position as brand journalist at Group Delphi, an experiential marketing company in Alameda, California.

Peter began his tenure at POND Trade in January of 2013 and has played an integral part in the growth of our editorial scope, page count and industry influence. He has read and fact-checked (and when necessary, revised) every word of the book for three years, and his investigative story, “Pond or Pool?” garnered enormous reader response.



“It’s been a joy and a privilege to work in such a fascinating industry with such passionate people,” Peter said. “I’ve loved building a rapport with our knowledgeable writers and enthusiastic readership. There’s no community quite like the pond community, and I’m going to miss it.”

Thankfully, Peter isn’t leaving us adrift. POND Trade will dive into 2016 with a new editor!

Jordan Morris has taken the reins as editor of POND Trade as of January 1. He has a bachelor’s degree in journalism and has previously worked in the editorial department of Robb Report magazine, editing and writing articles about the luxury lifestyle. His entrepreneurial spirit led him to co-found two small businesses and manage the marketing, branding and operations departments for the past 11 years. Following the sale of one business in 2015, Jordan seized the opportunity to return to his journalistic roots, starting a freelance editing company based in St. Petersburg, Florida, that copy-edits, proofreads and ghostwrites for customers across a wide variety of genres, from young adult fiction to business management.

“I’m thrilled to join the POND Trade team and work in an exciting niche industry,” Jordan said. “The community is quite active in Florida, and I already have a lot of respect for its enthusiasts. I’m looking forward to interacting with the writers and readers, and ultimately maximizing the value of the publication for everyone.”

As Jordan jumps into the water head-first, Peter will continue working with him in the early months of 2016 to ensure a seamless transition, maintaining the voice and quality of the magazine that our readers have come to expect.

**Antique Copper Splash Rings Add a Touch of Elegance**

Atlantic Water Gardens is pleased to announce the introduction of gleaming copper to the Formal Spillways line. The Copper Scuppers, with an antique copper finish over 304 stainless steel, come in 12-, 24- and 36-inch widths and feature a 1 1/2-inch female FIPT thread connection for easy plumbing. The three companion Antique Copper Splash Rings add a touch of elegance to the bottom of the falls while suppressing wayward splashing outside the basin. For an added touch that extends enjoyment of the water feature deep into the night, install a Warm White or Color Changing Light Ring inside the Splash Ring to illuminate the falling water from below. Coming first quarter 2016.

For further information:  
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**Suction Grid Pond Construction: Tips & Trade Secrets Revealed**

Imagine, if you will, a beautiful-looking, natural pond with stone, rocks and gravel that doesn’t require an annual drain and spring clean — a pond that only requires a couple of minutes of weekly maintenance, with water so clear that the fish appear to be floating in air, not swimming in water.

I’ve personally field-tested and researched the controversial pond construction philosophy using undergravel suction grids over the last decade, and my results might surprise you. I have compiled a formula using 11 ingredients, and the results have been amazing. I share them with you in my new book, “Suction Grid Pond Design Secrets.”

In addition to a full rundown of my field-tested results over 10 years of research and development, I also share some new trade secrets, detailed construction diagrams and easy-to-read schematics for your own application. Contact me directly for pre-order specials.

*Eric Triplett - The Pond Digger*  
[eric@theponddigger.com](mailto:eric@theponddigger.com)



**The Marine Aquarium Expo**

The Marine Aquarium Expo (“MAX”) is one of the largest and most innovative consumer trade shows in the aquatics industry. MAX is a hybrid event that combines the best of both industry and consumer interests all in one spectacular event.

MAX is an all-inclusive marine event where visitors will find a colorful array of fish/reef aquariums as well as peripheral goods and equipment. There are fish, corals and inverts of every variety available for sale, in addition to aquariums and aquarium-related accessories all under one roof!

One of the most popular activities for hobbyists at MAX is the opportunity to listen to informative lectures from our distinguished speakers, including Bob Fenner, Mark Callahan, Tullio Del Aquila, Les Wilson and Ariel Freudenthal. Past lectures covered everything from “How to build a tank” to “What type of lighting is best for your tank” to “How to move a 400-gallon tank across the country.” Virtually all guests will go home having learned something new and useful!

Visit us at [www.marineaquariumexpo.com](http://www.marineaquariumexpo.com) for more details on the event schedule, directions, hotel accommodations, speakers’ schedules and more.



**OASE Expands with Purchase of biOrb**

The OASE Group is pleased to announce that they have acquired the assets of the company Reef One Ltd. (Norwich, UK).

Reef One has been very successful in building the biOrb brand into what it is today — a premium range of aquarium products that stand for quality, unique design, service and innovation. This is a perfect fit for the OASE brand, which for more than 60 years has stood for quality and innovation in the water gardening segment. The aim of this acquisition is to couple these strengths with OASE’s own activities in indoor aquatics.

“We are very excited about the addition of biOrb to our range,” said Ansgar Paul, the CEO of OASE Group. “For several years we have watched and admired the design of the aquariums and the marketing around it.”

Paul Stevenson, the managing director of Reef One Ltd. commented, “When I decided to retire having built biOrb up from scratch, we could have chosen a number of partners. I saw OASE as the perfect fit to take the business to the next level and further cement our position as a key player in the UK market as well as build up distribution in North America and mainland Europe. In particular, I am very happy that my great team will now be part of the OASE organization.”

[www.oase-livingwater.com](http://www.oase-livingwater.com)  
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**Kasco Launches New LED Lighting Packages for Fountains & Aerators**

Kasco Marine, a leading manufacturer of aeration, fountain, de-icing and water-mixing solutions, is pleased to announce the launch of stainless steel and composite LED lighting packages for their industry-leading fountains and aerators.

**Stainless Steel LED Light Fixtures**

Kasco's new stainless steel LED lights feature increased brightness and a reliable, durable design. Rated at nearly 1,700 lumens per

fixture, these warm, white stainless steel lights are more than three times brighter than Kasco's current composite option, providing excellent illumination to any 1/2- to 7.5-horsepower Kasco fountain or aerator. With a corrosion-resistant housing and cap, a polycarbonate lens and fixtures designed to



minimize water entry points, these lights will withstand the test of time and add years of enjoyment to the water display. These stainless steel lights are certified to both UL and CSA standards.

**Composite LED Light Fixtures**

Kasco is excited to also introduce our new composite LED lights. At up to 35% brighter than the existing composite LED lights, these lights provide enhanced illumination to any 1/2- to 7.5-horsepower Kasco fountain or aerator and are available in classic white, amber, red, green or blue. Featuring a strong, durable design, these lights have thick outer walls for protection in the most demanding applications and ultraviolet-protected, engineering-grade resins for enhanced service life. These lights are available in multiple power cord lengths up to 500 feet. Kasco's new composite lights feature an integrated cap and lens, an internally sealed circuit and a sealed-fixture power cord that dramatically limits the potential for water entry. These new fixtures can also be 100 percent retrofitted with the existing fixtures. All existing hardware is compatible.

Kasco's new stainless steel and composite LED lights are offered in 3- and 6-fixture kits and are now available through Kasco's vast distribution network.

For more information, visit [www.KascoMarine.com](http://www.KascoMarine.com) or call 715/262-4488.

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