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## Invasion of the Pond Snatchers

The scoop on invasive plant  
containment p.40

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What Lies Beneath p.15 | Fire on the Water p.36 | Pond Vlogging p.55

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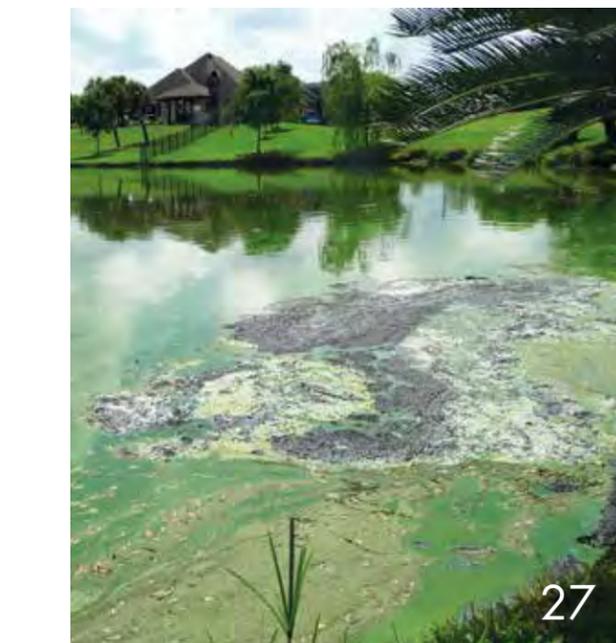


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### 27 Don't Blame the Pond!

We're all too familiar with the vista of an overgrown retention pond or an unsightly neighborhood lake. Too often, as **Ken Rust** explains, this is the result of people — not pond — mismanagement.

### 36 Fire on the Water

Mixing the elements in outdoor art is not exactly a new concept, but the "fire and water table" developed by **Shane Hemphill** and his team elevates outdoor innovation to a new level. You won't want to miss the story of how this part fire pit, part dining table, part water feature came to life.

### 40 Invasion of the Pond Snatchers COVER STORY

Looking for a definitive guide to all the unwelcome invasive plant species that could infiltrate your pond? **Mark Gibson** has you covered in this issue's cover story. From cattails to pickerel rush, learn all about the top offenders in your area and what you can do (and not do) to keep them out of your pond.

### 47 Sleeping Disease LANGUAGE OF KOI

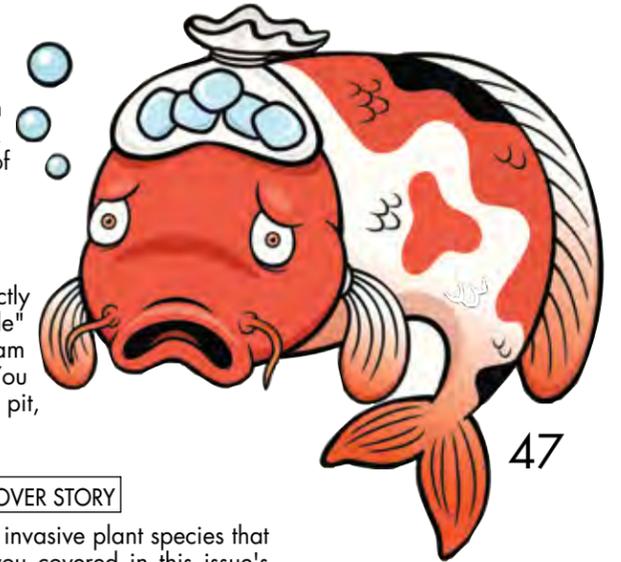
In this issue's Language of Koi feature, **Ben Plonski** delves into the seldom-discussed topic of carp edema virus, or koi sleeping disease. Learn all the symptoms and tips on how to preventively treat and protect your koi.

### 55 Lights, Camera, Traction!

Aquascape chief **Greg Wittstock** recounts his recent success with video blogging, or vlogging, and how it has elevated his company's high profile in the market. Read about how his YouTube journey has evolved and translated into higher profits for the Chicago-based water-feature manufacturer.

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San Angelo, Texas native **Anita Nelson** takes a look back at this year's annual symposium of the International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society in her hometown. If you didn't attend this year's show, check out our exclusive photo gallery to see what and whom you might have missed.



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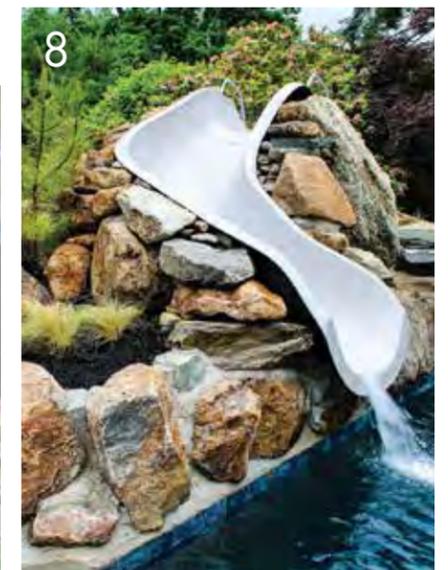
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## Upcoming Events

2019

January 9 - 11  
MANTS

Baltimore Convention Center  
Baltimore, Maryland  
www.mants.com

January 22 - 24  
Society of Lake Management  
Professionals 4th Annual Summit  
Holiday Inn Memphis-Downtown  
Memphis, Tennessee  
www.lakeprofessionals.org

February 19 - 22  
Water Garden Expo  
Heart of Oklahoma Expo Center  
Shawnee, Oklahoma  
www.wgexpo.com

March 2 - 3  
32nd Annual Koi Club of San Diego Koi Show  
Del Mar Fairgrounds  
Del Mar, California  
www.koiclubofsandiego.org

March 22 - 24  
Central Florida Koi & Goldfish Show  
Avanti Palms Resort Hotel  
Orlando, Florida  
www.cfks.org

May 7 - 9  
National Hardware Show  
Las Vegas Convention Center  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
www.nationalhardwareshow.com

August 21 - 25  
Pondemonium  
The Q Center  
St. Charles, Illinois  
www.pondemonium.com

October 21 - 23  
GIE+Expo  
Kentucky Exposition Center  
Louisville, Kentucky  
www.gie-expo.com

Are you attending an event that you think others should know about? Are you hosting an event and want more people to come? Send event info to [llgelles@pondtrademag.com](mailto:llgelles@pondtrademag.com).



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## Publisher's Perspective

### New Year, New Ponds

Yahoo! It's 2019. Happy New Year! At the stroke of midnight, I was thinking of all the resolutions I will make in 2019 — NOT. Whether you're a resolution person or not, I know one thing that's on the minds of all pond professionals' minds out there: more ponds in 2019!



Here at POND Trade, we've already got an excitingly busy editorial calendar for 2019, with our third annual Water Artisans of the Year contest results coming out in the next issue. Stay tuned and prepare to be wowed!

But first thing's first, as always. We've got another robust issue for you with nine features to educate and inspire your waterscape operations. Personally, I was really interested in Ken Rust's article on pond and people management on pg. 27. We all know that living on or near a body of water generally raises property values, but what happens when the body of water is a total mess? Before you start pointing fingers at the pond, often the culprit is a homeowner's association or other group of people who are mismanaging the pond's upkeep. Ken's article just might inspire you to get to the bottom of an unkept pond or lake near you.

I also thought the fire and water table that inspired "Fire on the Water" by Shane Hemphill (pg. 37) was incredibly riveting. I mean, who would've thought that combining a dinner table, fire pit and water feature would have turned out so flawlessly? Mixing the elements is a risky venture, but Shane and his team show you how it's done right.

Ben Plonski is back in our Language of Koi segment with a discussion of koi sleeping disease and how to diagnose and treat it. Unless you're a koi expert, odds are you haven't been privy to a lot of this information, so you'll definitely want to check out Ben's feature on pg. 47.

Finally, if you're looking for marketing inspiration, turn over to Greg Wittstock's article on video blogging ("vlogging") on pg. 55. Anybody can record a YouTube video, but not too many vloggers have seen the success on this particular platform like Aquascape has over the past couple of years. This feature just might make you consider adding vlogging to your repertoire!

Happy PONDering!

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Matt and foreman Bernardo Escobar Perez work on setting the diving rock into the pool.



After 40 tons of boulders, the final result is a 10-foot slide with a curve and waterfall.

# Slam Dunk!

A dream waterfall slide in Philadelphia

by **Matthew Reale,**  
AquaReale

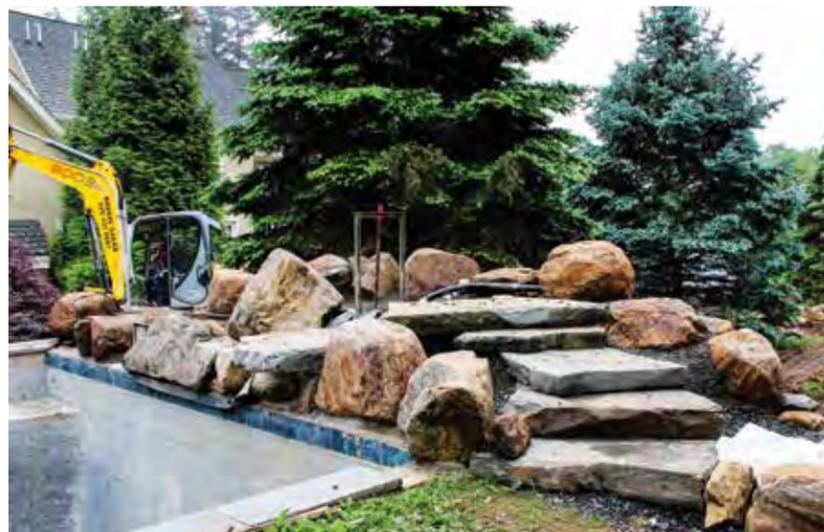
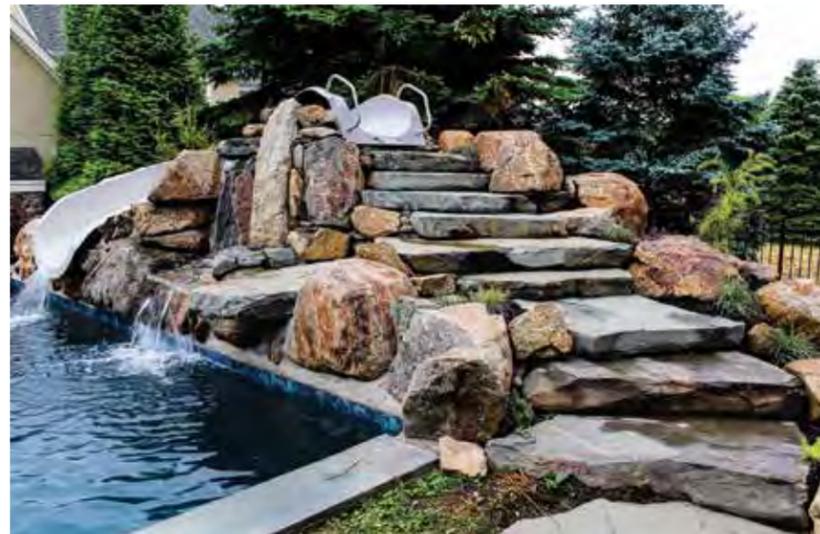
A top NBA player and Olympic gold medalist had a vision of a pool waterslide. He wanted a pool oasis for his kids — one that included his dream slide into the pool. He had never seen exactly what he wanted, but he was able to describe it.

He only lives at this house during the offseason, so timing was very important. We had a tight timeline to make his dream come to life. His kids

wanted a cool water slide, and he wanted it to come out of a waterfall.

## The Vision

We met the client through his pool contractor, someone we had worked with before. Our client is a very busy athlete, so we never did get to actually meet him. Instead, we cultivated a long-distance relationship, emailing with him through his team of assistants. Soon, we understood his vision and emailed him a rough sketch of what we could do. He immediately agreed!



We had the luxury of space, if not time, on this job. We started the job by creating a staging area. There was enough space for us to have our materials near us, so we didn't have to bring in a lot of materials halfway through the job. We needed to remove a section of the fence and relocated an outlet. That was it — we were ready to go.

A local excavation company was used to supply the boulders. These rocks were excavated from a local development, so they easily matched the aesthetics. Our local supplier sourced the bluestone slabs that were used for the steps and diving rock.

### Setting the Base

The area for the waterfall slide had a gradual slope away from the pool, which needed to be addressed. Before this was dealt with, we needed to measure everything to make sure our idea was going to fit. Only then could we proceed with the leveling.

A half-circle wall was started with large boulders dry set to create a stable base. These were stacked, and the area behind it was filled and tamped with modified stone (crushed gravel with fines in it) to create a solid foundation. Once the boulders were almost level with the pool, we poured a 6-inch pad of concrete along the pool edge. The pad came back about 6 feet from the pool edge. This was done to allow us the ability to cement down our pool-edge boulders and mount our slide hardware.

### Building a Hill

At this point, we had a level surface from the pool edge to the back retaining boulders. The next step was to go vertical. When you don't have a hill to use, you need to create one. This meant we needed to build the back and front up a row, and then fill the field.

We chose to start with the pool-edge boulders. These rocks were going to set the scene, so we wanted to choose our best rocks with matching edges so we could set them close and have a uniform joint that would be mortared and pointed. Once we laid these, they were removed, cleaned and set back down in a fresh layer of mortar. This was done until we came to the stones that would make up the waterfall spill into the pool. These rocks were dry set and then set aside so we could deal with the liner.

The concrete deck in this area was cleaned and dried. A concrete prep spray was used on the surface to create a tack so that we could install our two-sided seam tape. Two rows of seam taped were installed. The rows were 3 inches apart, starting about 1 inch from the pool edge and were as long as the boulders that were going to serve as our waterfall pieces (roughly 6 feet wide). Once the seam tape was installed, we dry set the liner and underlayment. The liner was laid out so there was about 6 inches hanging over the pool edge along with enough width and length to accommodate our design. The next step was to fold back the liner, peeling one row at a time starting with the back row, priming the liner and sticking it down. At this point, the rocks that had been dry set were ready to be cemented down.

### Slide Installation

This was the point when the slide needed to be dry set, with its bases anchored down to the pad. Then, we had to unbolt the slide and set it aside. This allowed us to keep setting rocks and fill so that when the slide was permanently anchored, it would have the appearance that it was sitting on the rocks. We had to bring the slide back in a few times to ensure the rocks wouldn't keep it from going back in.

The slide was 10 feet in total length with a hard turn, and it started about 4 1/2 feet above the pool deck. This meant a set of steps needed to be installed to get to that point. I had the idea of using bluestone slabs, because they come between 5 and 8 inches thick. After the slide anchors were set, the remaining deck boulders were cemented down in place, completing the entire front edge.

The step portion was a slow process. We couldn't go too far ahead on the steps, because other pieces had to be woven in, like the diving rock. The thickest, longest piece was picked out as our diving rock. The stone was set, with the front 12 inches extending beyond the edging boulders, so there was suitable clearance for divers. On the back end, the slab went back under one of the step slabs. Once this was dry set, all was removed, and the slab was set in cement with the stepper installed on top. This was part of my original vision. As you're going up to

Clockwise from top left: Bernardo Escobar Perez sorts through the rocks looking for the perfect waterfall piece. The main deck pieces are set and put into position. The final project shows the bluestone steps going to the top of the slide. Matt Reale sets the liner section for the waterfall. Finally, the rock steps are shown about halfway through the building process.



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the slide, you can detour and take a dive!

### Waterfall Time!

This was the point where we all needed to focus on the main waterfall. Getting this done would involve three people: one in the machine and two handling and setting. Sometimes a fourth person was needed to serve as a pair of eyes between the operator and those handling the rock.

The slide would need to be temporarily installed, since the falls had to fit within the curve of the slide. I guess this is what added to the difficulty, because this was when that fourth person was most needed for machine guidance and eyes.

We chose a few hefty rocks to be the main falls. I wanted to have one nice drop into a shallow pool and then flow into the swimming pool. We did a short, fat rock flanked by a taller, skinny rock, so we could have a space where the

water would originate from — kind of like flanking a biofalls, but with a waterfall scupper!

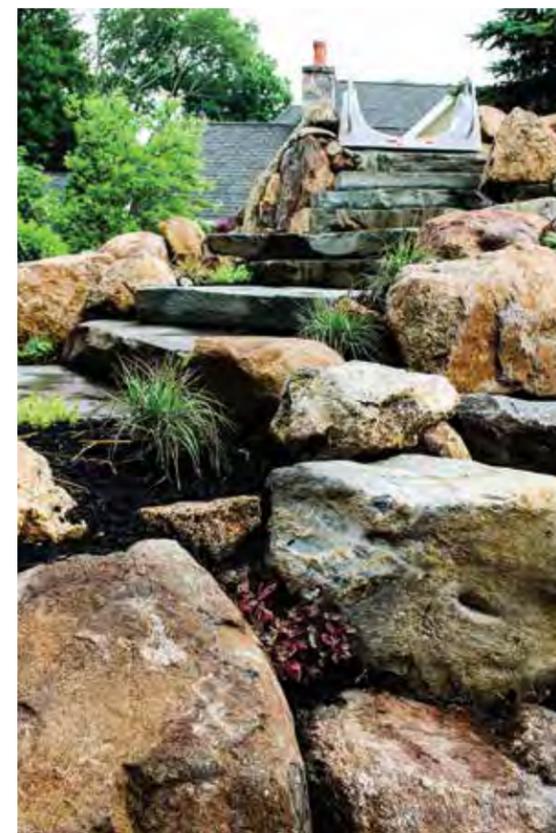
Once all the large waterfall stones were in place, the slide was permanently installed. Now we had our finished height set. The goal was to finish the detail: setting the scupper, cementing it in and attaching the plumbing to the scupper and the slide. We had to run two 2-inch lines under the area that were tied into the pool pumps. We then set all the small stones to hide the base of the slide, giving the appearance that it was sitting in this stonescape.

We only had one chance to make this right, and we were up to the challenge. Schedules had to be changed, and other pond builds were put off so we could complete this project before the end of basketball season. We finished the project on time and on budget, and the client was thrilled. A happy ending for all! ☺

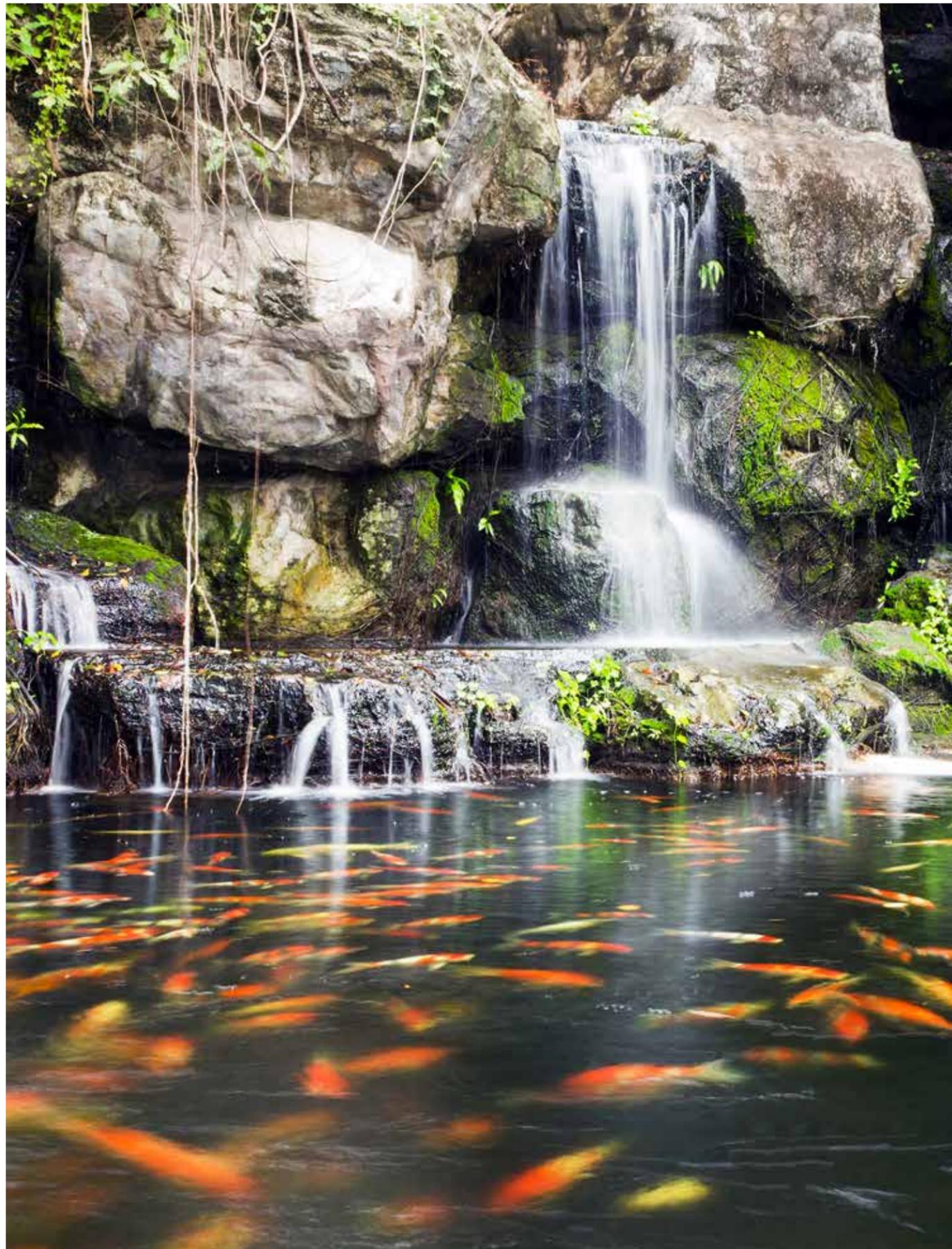
### About the Author



**Matthew Reale** is the co-owner of AquaReale. He is a Certified Aquascape Installer. Matt has been in the landscape business for more than 20 years and has been focused on building ponds and water features for about 10 years. He has built and renovated hundreds of ponds in the Philadelphia area, including large projects at the University of Pennsylvania and Villanova University. Matt has a degree in landscape design from the Temple University Department of Landscape Architecture and Horticulture and enjoys sharing nature and his love of the outdoors with his kids.



Here's the backside view (left) of the steps going to the slide. Bluestone steps were chosen for minimum slippage. The final result (right) is a beautiful entertainment space crafted exactly according to the customer's wishes.



# What Lies Beneath

Building beauty above and below the water line

by **Shane Stefek,**  
Water Garden Gems

No backyard oasis would be complete without a beautiful koi pond or water garden as its centerpiece. We make a living pouring our experience, knowledge, God-given artistic ability and personal blood, sweat and tears into creating masterpieces that our customers will love for years and years to come. We as professionals can build some amazingly stunning waterfalls, streams and outdoor living areas, but in almost every situation, I see one consistent flaw across our industry. We too often build for the initial wow factor and rarely for the low-maintenance, long-term beauty. We build beauty above the water but tend to poorly design the underwater living environment, creating a future mess that requires constant cleaning and maintenance.

The perfect pond is not the pond that is the most beautiful on Day One; it's the pond that is beautiful every day of the year, year after year, without having to be cleaned routinely. In other words, it's a pond that is self-sustaining and maintains below under the water line for as long of a time as it remains beautiful above the water line.

Ponds should have the same artistic detail and professional expertise above and below the water surface, with clean floors rather than accumulated sludge. This is what you should be building toward.

## Keep the Floor in Mind

No customer wants to look into their relatively new pond and see greenish-brown sludge and algae at the

bottom. This accumulation of biowaste detracts from the rest of the beauty of the feature and causes the eye to stray from the beautiful workmanship and colorful koi. This biowaste is also going to cause future algae and water color issues as well as hinder circulation and oxygen levels. We can engineer ponds that work perfectly above and below the water level, thereby providing the greatest possible offering to our customer. So, let us start

The perfect pond is not the pond  
that is the most beautiful on Day One;  
it's the pond that is beautiful every  
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building ponds with the pond floor in mind.

First, we have to create circulation at the bottom of the pond. Using bottom drains, aeration systems, circulation jets or undergravel intake systems, we can create water flow at the bottom of the pond to keep it clean. We need to engineer a flow system that does not allow things to settle, but instead keeps particles suspended until they flow into the pump and filter system, where they can be expelled from the pond.

Properly locating bottom drains and aeration systems will direct water flow and remove the waste from the pond. If you cannot install bottom drains, using floor jets to keep the particles from settling is a



good second option. Proper flow rates for the pond are also key. We should always be circulating our koi pond once an hour, but that can and probably should hold true to water gardens as well. Keep in mind, you do not have to stop at that rate. Circulating two to three times per hour is not a problem, and when done properly, it could help with keeping substantial flow rates along the bottom of the pond.

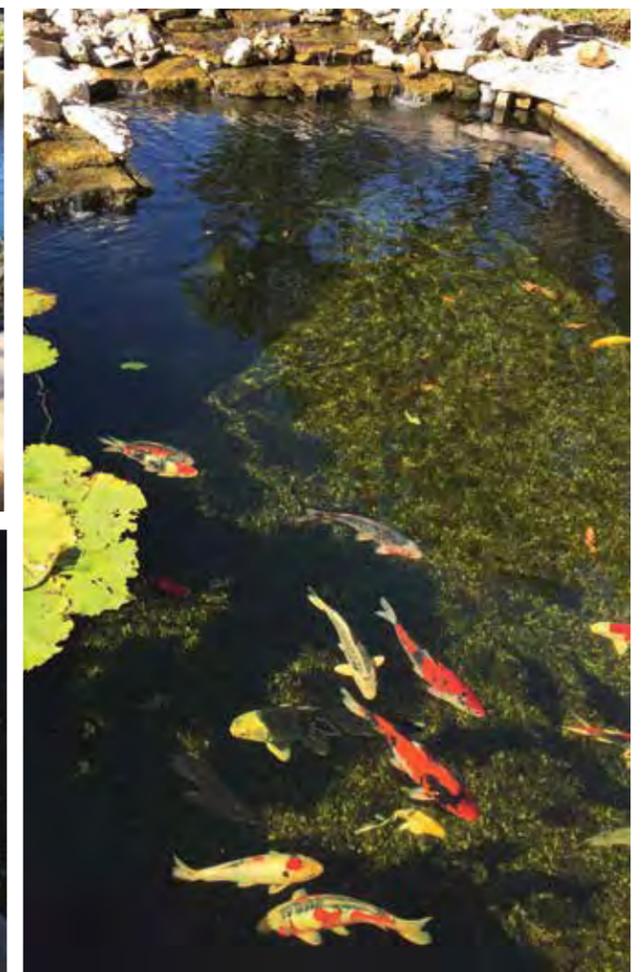
A high-quality filter is a must to capture the waste as it is removed from the pond. When space allows and the system is capable, a sieve filter or sediment chamber is a great addition to external pump and filter systems to help collect the solids prior to reaching the main filter. Bog filters are great

for catching all the waste if there is enough room in the design. For tighter spaces, I go with an Aqua UV Ultima II partnered with a Matala stainless UV clarifier. We do not want to work so hard to get the sediment to stay off the bottom and then fail to install a filter that prevents it from returning to the pond. When it is feasible, a final polishing filter is great for collecting the finest of particles, so long as it is easy to access and clean, as this may need to happen frequently.

### Avoid the Rocks

Rocks and pebbles in the bottom of the pond are bad for circulation. They will add to your sludge-accumulation issues, and as the sludge falls into the crevices between the rocks,

These amazing colors in your koi have a beautiful backdrop reminiscent of a painting. The pond floor is 4 1/2 feet under the surface of the water, and the colors of rock are brilliant and a clear, making this our most-talked-about pond. We will never have to do a pond cleaning on this one — never!



Just by looking at this pond (top, left), you would have no idea that it's actually more than 6 feet deep. Koi can roam far, wide, high and low in this pristine koi pond, where the owner enjoys swimming with his koi more than in his traditional swimming pool. A clean pond floor (bottom, left) makes for some happy koi. This 23,000-gallon, 7-foot-deep koi pond (right) has an undergravel intake system, Ultima filter and Matala UV clarifier. You can see every individual 1-inch rock at the bottom of the pond every day, with no need for cleaning, making it a flagship design and a picture-perfect pond. We dose monthly with our sludge pellets, keeping the water flow through the rocks and helping the bog and filter system stay clean and clear of accumulation.

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it stops the water flow and creates a biowaste mess at the bottom of the pond. Beneficial bacteria can only break down waste if there are adequate oxygen levels. Without water flow between the rocks, there is no oxygen. This causes numerous safety issues for the pond and the fish over time, but plain and simple, it just looks ugly. I have consulted with customers who thought their pond was 2 feet deep with no rocks on the bottom, only to find under a foot of sludge a bed of gravel and extreme levels of stench, anaerobic gases and dangerous toxins. Rocks are pretty to look at, but not for very long if they are just thrown in the pond to hide the liner. Keep the bottom of the pond clean and healthy to allow the circulation system to work properly. Keep particulates from settling by laying great rock work above

the waterline and leaving a clean liner or concrete floor at the bottom of the pond. The exception to the rule is undergravel intake systems. These can flow water down through the floor rocks and out to the pump, serving as the main intake system for the pond. This constant flow of water through the rocks creates a biofiltration system that breaks down the waste before it accumulates, keeping the rock floor beautiful year after year. I love designing these and have had great success coupling them with an Ultima filter and Matala UV clarifier. Our customers love looking 5, 6 and even 7 feet deep and seeing all the different colors of rock at the bottom. The colors of koi can pop in contrast with the natural rocks backdropping them, and such a pond requires no floor maintenance. With perfect water

quality, the pond looks like it was built yesterday, both above and below the water line, every day of the year, year after year.

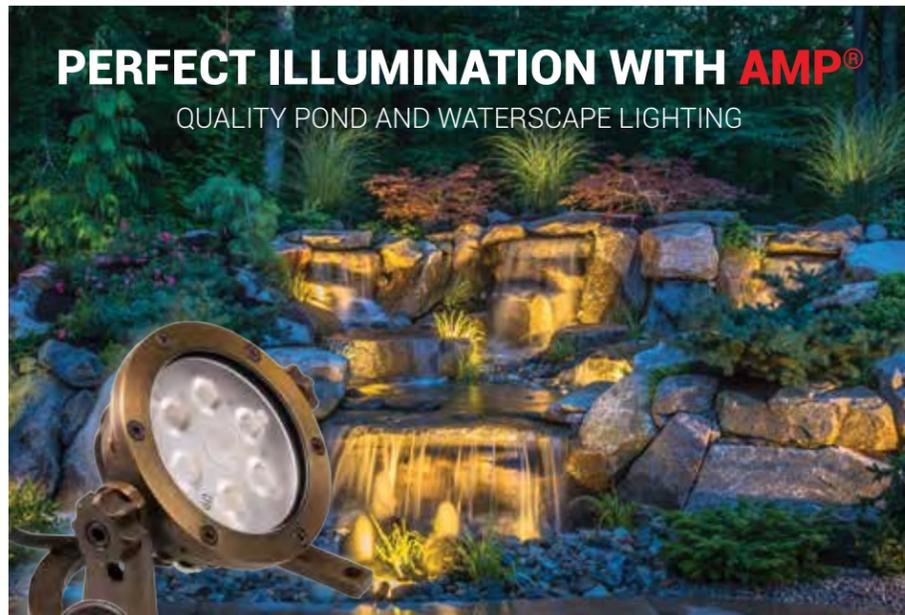
### Add-on Flooring

Often the most challenging situations are not our personal builds, but ponds that someone else built. These present prime opportunities to improve the pond and our customers' enjoyment by engineering a clean-floor system. Ponds without bottom drains have to be retrofitted with circulation jets, retro suction drains or possibly an undergravel intake system. All are options that will provide immediate results that your clients will praise you for.

These improvements will most likely require an additional pump for the added

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necessary circulation, creating an opportunity for you to add a new water feature to the pond or improve the flow they currently have. These changes will be for naught, however, if the filter is inadequate. So, make sure the new design has everything it needs so that it can be as successful as it can be.

What an amazing offering to take a pond or simple rebuild that requires routine cleaning and leave the customer with a pond that has a clean floor and all the equipment it needs to stay clean from here on out. Can you imagine the number of referrals coming your way if you could rebuild it better than new?

### Maintain to a Cleaner Standard

When you have to clean a pond because it is not designed properly to sustain a clean floor, you want to do so in the least intrusive way possible to minimize damage to the ecosystem. If you can maintain the healthy bacteria levels and keep most of the living water in the pond, you can avoid typical post-cleaning issues like fish loss, green water and ecosystem crashes.

Vacuuming the floor of the pond is by far the best way to clean the pond, and with new offerings like the Matala Cyclone Vac that has dual pumps for constant vacuuming, the process is relatively quick when done correctly. Vacuuming is easiest and most successful on bare floors without rocks and gravel; however, with the Cyclone Gravel Head, you can take care of most issues if there are only a couple of inches of rock on the pond floor. The mere ability to vacuum the floor is reason enough to leave the deepest floor barren, without rock. If you are cleaning ponds, this type of equipment is well worth your investment when you consider all the benefits to the pond ecosystem and the happy customer

that receives a pond cleaning with no negative side effects.

### Digesters & Floor Pellets

For all the time between cleanings, the use of organic digesters can keep the pond floor looking quite clean and the filter systems strong and healthy. Do not underestimate the impact a high-quality digester can have on the entire pond ecosystem, as it removes excessive nutrients, waste and nitrates from the water table. Your customers will love the look of their pond floor if proper doses are applied routinely to handle the waste, especially if the original pond was not designed correctly.

Sludge pellets can clean

the buildup between the rocks at the bottom of ponds to reduce the risk of biomass. They can be used to reduce the amount of sludge over a period of time without having to vacuum or drain and clean the pond. We have used our sludge pellets to clean countless pond floors caked in years of sludge buildup without the need to drain or vacuum the pond. We have even used them to clean the gravel in bog filters and improve flow rates through all types of biofilters.

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natural beauty.

Whether we are building new designs, rebuilding old ones or offering cleaning services, we can elevate our services to create higher customer satisfaction and set ourselves apart from competitors. All it takes is a focus on the proper build below the water line that is more or less equal to the effort we place on the rock work above the water. My most popular ponds are not the ones with the largest waterfalls or best rock work; they're the ones with pristine floors. The ponds that look brand-new every day are the ponds my customers want in their backyards and the ponds I enjoy engineering the most. ☞

### About the Author



**Shane Stefek** is the president of Water Garden Gems, a koi and pond specialty retailer outside San Antonio, Texas. Water Garden Gems has been a leader in the koi and water garden industry for more than 25 years. Water Garden Gems annually hosts the longest-running koi show in Texas and is a premier supplier of imported Japanese koi and show-quality goldfish.

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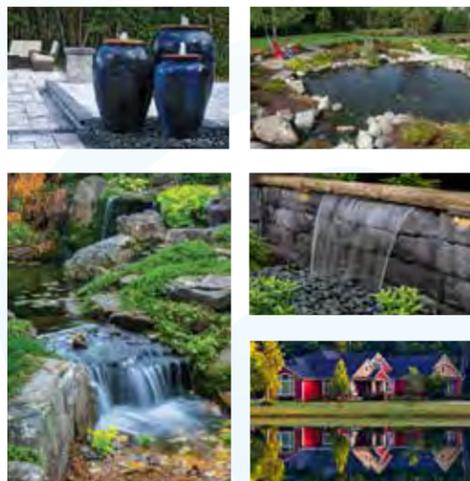
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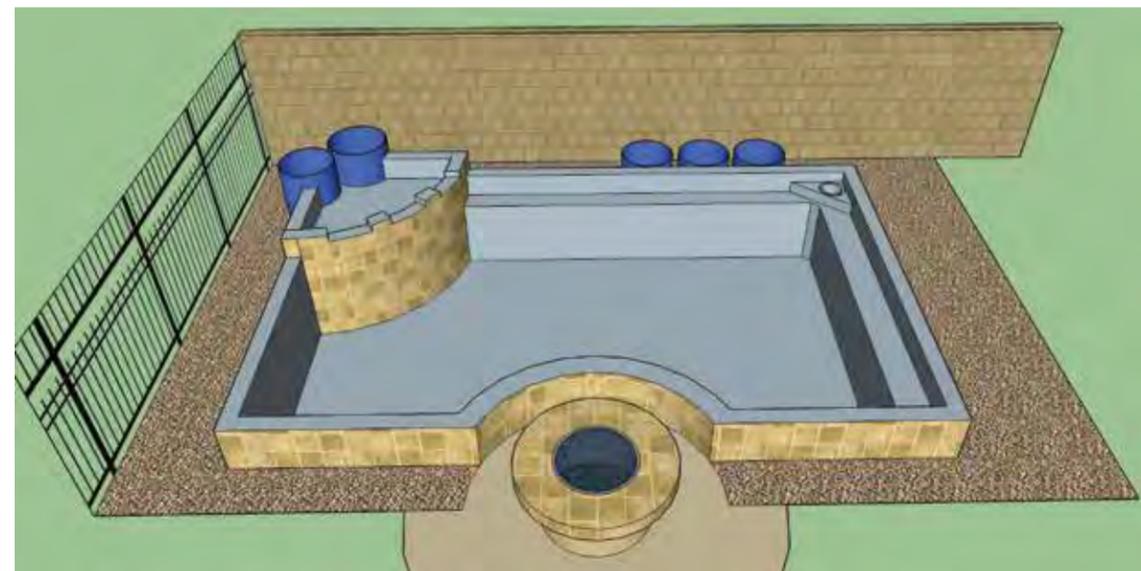


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| Best Practices |



Above is a 3-D sketch drawing of this project printed in 2-D.

## Formally Raised

Designing a raised, formal pond in a backyard oasis

by Kent Wallace,  
Living Water Solutions

A few months ago, I received a call from a couple relocating from California to Las Vegas. They had just purchased a new home and needed to move and quarantine their fish while a pond was built. Not only did

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

they need help moving their fish and temporarily housing them, but they also needed assistance with designing the new pond. Of course, I agreed and supplied them with a tank and aeration. The quarantine tank was set up in the front courtyard.

### Structural Design

Brenda and Daryl's backyard faced south,

with open fencing on a golf course. A swimming pool and fire pit took up most of the backyard. A rectangular area of grass on the west end wrapped around the fire pit deck, giving the backyard a formal feel. I suggested a raised pond that would be the same shape and size as the grass area, which would allow pond-edge seating around the fire pit. A 3-foot line of hedges was along the fence, blocking the grass area from the golf course. The top of the water feature needed to be below the top of the hedge so it would not be seen from the golf course. I designed a set of low spills that dropped just a few inches and arched out from the biofilters and upper pool.

The precalculated volume was somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000 gallons, so a total turnover of at least 6,000 gph was necessary. With low spills and no splashing waterfalls for aeration, I chose to split the system between standard pumping and airlift pumping. Space



between the west block wall and the pond edge was tight, but I could fit a series of 55-gallon drums down the side and still have room to walk. Two 3-inch aerated bottom drains would each flow into a pair of 55-gallon drum radial separators tied together for cleaning. The pair

## The object was to create a raised pond that looked like it was part of the original backyard design.

of prefilters incorporated a 3-inch connector pipe and knife valve for isolation, allowing for only one discharge pump instead of two for cleaning both tanks. Both tanks could be cleaned with one pump by opening the valve between the tanks.

### Filtration Design

Each of the radial separators is connected to an air-driven dilution reactor (ADDR) through separate, 3-inch lines. The flow through the prefilters and aerated biofilter is created with a 4-inch airlift inside the ADDR. The airlift dumps into a 4-inch air-purge down-tube that splits up the water among four 2-inch returns about a foot off the floor in various locations. No valves are necessary on this system — just stand pipes inside the radial separator tanks for the inlets from the bottom drains, which are used during cleaning. The down-flow air-purge tube removes the bubbles from the water column, preventing burping and surging at the returns. This circuit will create approximately 4,000 gph of aerated flow, creating a fully oxygenated system. A drain line is located at the bottom of the ADDR to facilitate cleaning. This 2-inch line connects to the first prefilter tank and allows the same discharge pump in the prefilter to be used for cleaning this filter.

The upper pool and spills are operated with a Wlim Wave I 1/6 Horsepower pump at approximately 4,000 gph. The water is pulled from a corner, shelf-mounted, in-pond Aquaniche skimmer and a midwater drain flowing to

Plumbing for bottom drains and returns (top) are installed under concrete collar. Stonehill Creek Technicians (middle) carefully seam the curve around the fire pit. A cement board (bottom) is curved and formed in place.



The finished pond looks just like the 3-D drawing!

two upflow sand and gravel filters. The in-pond skimmer eliminates the bulge from the side of a raised-edge pond and keeps a cleaner top-cap look with no lid necessary.

### Pond Construction

Hector Mardueno of Stonehill Creek Landscaping was contracted to build the pond. As a raised-edge pond, the sides become an architectural element. Hector and the owners chose to stucco the sides to match the home and found a top cap that complemented the colors of the pool tile and fire pit. The object was to create a raised pond that looked like it was part of the original backyard design.

This pond is designed with a concrete collar and shelf with solid-filled block walls and a dirt floor. Because of its shape, with its two convex curves protruding into the rectangle of the pond, the EPDM liner was going to have some serious wrinkles. Hector decided to cut and seam all the sides and corners to eliminate the wrinkles. This would be difficult, but he and his crew did an

amazing job. The surfaces were parged with a cement-mortar mix to eliminate any lines that would show up in the liner, and the drains were concreted in place. The returns were held in place with cement to prevent movement over time.

Two radial separator prefilters and the ADDR biofilter were set in a row behind the west pond wall. The in-pond



The EPDM liner is attached to the shelf-mounted in-pond skimmer.

skimmer was concreted into the shelf on the northwest corner. The balance of the plumbing was finished and sanded in, and the underlayment was put in place. The liner was stretched in place with just

a couple of inches of water on it to help hold it and allow for pulling and smoothing the wrinkles from the floor. Hector's crew carefully trimmed the underlayment and darted the liner in the corners, and then seamed the lines. The curve around the fire pit was created as a sheet of liner that wrapped around the inside and was seamed a few inches above the floor along the curve.

The other difficult curve was below the waterfall pool and spills. The issue for the curve under the spills was the tile. The tile needed something to attach to, so Hector bent a thin piece of cement board around the curve just above the concrete collar and clamped it in the corners. He drilled several holes through the cement board and then filled the gap between the liner and cement board with injected foam.

Once the foam had hardened, it permanently bonded the cement board to the curved liner. The spill areas were cut and seamed before being connected to the liner inside the upper waterfall pool. The upper pool is also a small,

planted bog area, so a 2-inch drain assembly was installed in the center

In the corner above the upper pool, two upflow, 55-gallon-drum sand and

the pond. A 57-watt LWS UV light is mounted in a downflow position inside one of the filters. A 2-inch upper drain from each filter ties into the discharge lines near the prefilters. The prefilters were covered with sealed wooden lids painted in a textured gray color to help them disappear.

The block chosen for the top cap is 14-by-24-by-2-inch Turkish travertine. Hector's crew did an excellent job cutting and piecing the corners and curves to get a clean look. Once completed, the pool, patio and fire pit seamlessly led to the pond, making it feel as though all these elements had always existed together. ☺



Carl inspects his new pond and approves the quality of the work.

to facilitate an occasional flushing and cleaning. The corner shelf with the in-pond skimmer was cut, folded and seamed.

gravel filters were installed. A small spill comes from each filter, which flows through the bog to the two spills dropping into

### 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 racecar 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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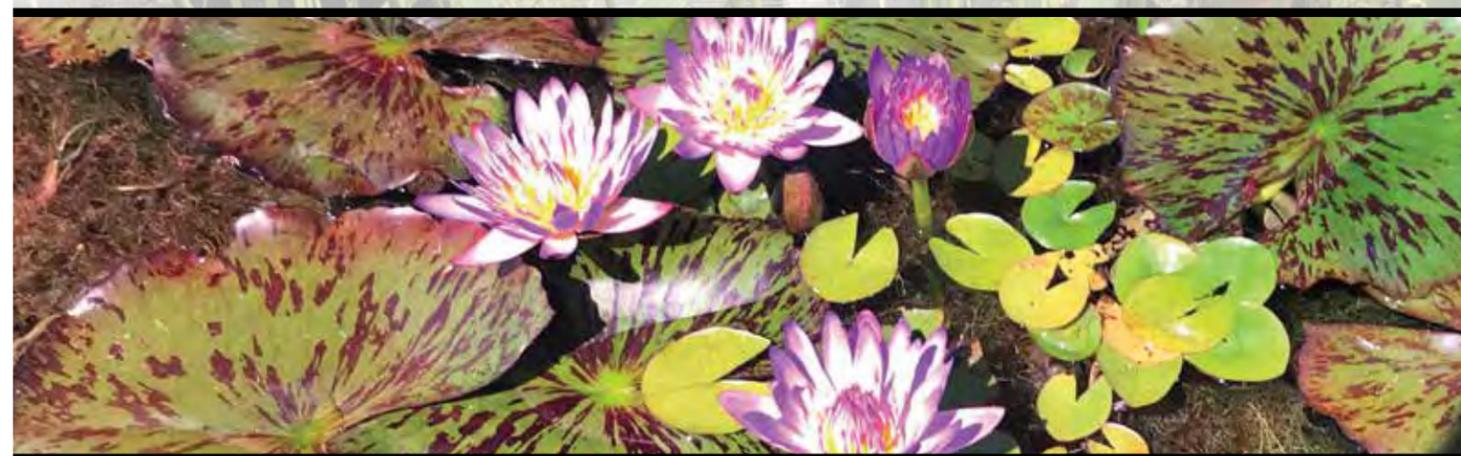
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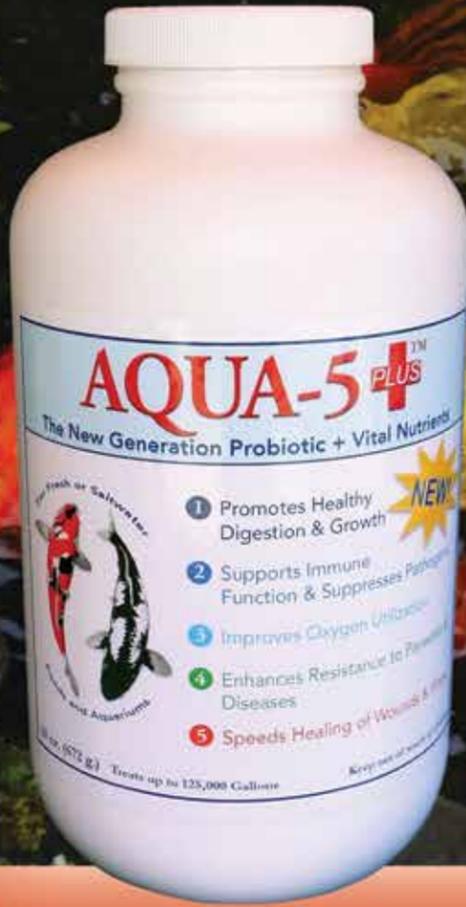
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Man-made urban ponds have lots of challenges and need active management. Pond owners need education.

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Natural ponds require **people management**

by **Ken Rust**,  
Louisiana Pond Management

Urban and suburban ponds make up the majority of our treatments and contracts. Many are dressed-up stormwater retention ponds, while some are bona fide lakes in an urban setting with urban challenges.

I say two things often enough that my co-workers are tired of hearing them. The first is, "I am still learning about ponds and always plan to." This is not because I am a great scholar; it's due to the fact that natural waters are incredibly dynamic

and complex. Just when you get comfortable, you will be forced to learn something, and ponds will always give you a new scenario or problem to solve.

The second thing I like to say is, "It's not pond management; it's people management." Ponds behave exactly like they should under the right physical conditions, when considering nutrients and biological factors. It's the people as clients who make the relationship more complicated. Managing potential clients' expectations that are created from fantasy, the internet and the latest advice from the feed store — that part is complicated.



## Build Perspective

In most situations, I like to have extended conversations on the phone with potential clients or meet with them at the pond. They may think they are interviewing me, but I am interviewing them as well. Most pond owners need a certain amount of education about their pond and their situation. Not all pond owners will offer the respect you deserve as an experienced biologist, nor will they



Having a conversation with a pond owner to determine their knowledge about ponds and setting expectations helps with customer satisfaction.

have a realistic perspective about how business is done.

I try to offer a few talking points to pond owners, especially when they are new and seem open to learning. The unfortunate, yet admirable homeowner's association (HOA) president generally appreciates them so that he or she can justify a pond budget at the next meeting. Some of the main points include the following:

Water is a focal point and will attract the eye like nothing else in the landscape. That is why so many real estate advertisements use ponds or lakes in photos.

Water is three-dimensional, and it takes effort to affect it. They are usually surprised to find out the actual amount of

Many times, construction plans do not leave any easement for access to the pond for future management or renovation work.



Developers can hurry through the process of pond construction, leaving pond owners with future liabilities.

water circulating in their 2-acre neighborhood pond (326,000 gallons per acre foot is worth remembering to impress a client). This is helpful in explaining why treating vegetation is more expensive, since it also is three-dimensional.

Ponds are man-made and have naturally occurring bad behavior that requires management. Management of a pond needs a budget akin to that which is allocated to the same amount of managed green space, for instance if the 1-acre pond were a 1-acre managed lawn for a park.

Finally, water has an amplified effect on property value for all adjacent properties on and off the pond. Appraisers always look to comparable sales in the area, even the homes on an unmanaged pond that might have sold at a discount.

## Budgets

Property that includes a pond or lake is an asset and a liability. Until someone gets a proposal for performing pond work, they don't know how much money it costs to manage, improve and manipulate an aquatic environment. Last year, an HOA called me to their 6-acre lake. They had not considered management for budgetary reasons,

and they also chose to neglect a water hyacinth infestation. They now have a 6-acre raft of water hyacinth. They did not accept my proposal for cleaning it up for budgetary reasons. Another similar hyacinth infestation grew from 1/2 acre to

**Property that includes a pond or lake is an asset and a liability. Until someone gets a proposal for performing pond work, they don't know how much money it costs to manage, improve and manipulate an aquatic environment.**

3 acres while a neighborhood volunteer attempted to treat it. Then they took the lowest bid, only to be disappointed with the results. At this point, they had already spent their hard-fought budget that stemmed from multiple meetings and a special assessment.

## Group Ownership

Many urban ponds are owned by an association or corporate entity. The HOA may control the pond, or in some cases there may be a pond owner's association, or POA.

A POA is typically made up of homeowners directly adjacent to the

pond. They enjoy direct access and may even exclude the other neighbors from accessing the pond for fishing or recreational strolls. However, when a management expense arises, they realize that the number of households splitting

the expense is limited. Even without a POA as a subset of an association, many HOA members who are not directly on the pond will frequently object to pond-management budget items. Every HOA member tends to have a different opinion about how to manage the pond, creating numerous challenges for the board of an HOA.

Within a corporate structure, the administrator with a view of the pond from their office will express concern over the perceived condition of the pond. This is typically sent to grounds maintenance, which either tries to address it or contacts an outside pond

manager. People and personalities can really come into play here, since pride and poor education can stand in the way as unnecessary challenges to a good solution.

Did the HOA build the pond or lake? No, the developer did. Do they always do it correctly? Absolutely not. Who gets stuck holding the bag? The HOA. Developers often construct ponds with major flaws, either out of ignorance or for the purpose of cutting corners on the budget. This can make for some enormous liabilities, all the while the developer's real estate agent is selling pond lots at a premium. Typically, when a neighborhood is still being developed, the developer controls decisions. Later, the developer will transfer rights and responsibilities to the HOA. The residents may be excited about their new decision-making power, but they are also assuming ongoing liability, especially when it comes to a pond or lake.

### Design Issues to Beware

Long, slender channels that are intended to serve as a feature of the pond are really glorified ditches and rapidly fill with aquatic and terres-

**Did the HOA build the pond or lake? No, the developer did. Do they always do it correctly? Absolutely not. Who gets stuck holding the bag? The HOA.**

trial plants (usually cattails and then willows). Also look out for bad slopes and steep sides on deeper ponds. A nice slope for a pond is 3:1, or 3 feet horizontally for every 1 foot of depth, gently sloping to the edge. This is chiefly for mowing and maintenance considerations. No one, especially commercial

landscapers, wants to mow on a sharp hill, especially when your commercial mower can fall in a pond! (Weed-eating isn't much fun, either.) Also, steep sides on deeply excavated ponds will not remain as a wall of soil and will experience major erosion issues. A predominant wind or lots of wildlife can aggravate this greatly. I have seen homeowners lose 15 feet of their yard into ponds, including sections of fence.

With a lack of forethought or the desire to squeeze in one more premium pond lot, a developer may close off any practical access to the pond. So if I need to treat the pond, the price increases due to the fact that I have to unload the boat and drag it through a 4-foot gate before treating the pond. What if the pond fills in, as many retention ponds do? What if the dam or drainage structure needs work that only a machine can perform? Who wants to volunteer access for an excavator through their yard and fence?

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tures in general. This includes proper construction and maintenance of dams, as well as proper drain control structures. Water pressure on a dam can be really dangerous for people and property downstream. Trees should not be allowed to grow on a dam, as they can die or be blown over in a storm, causing dam failure. Dams need to be properly constructed and packed with drain-control structures and accommodations for storms depositing large amounts of rain. I recently visited a construction site and the well-constructed dam had a small water-control structure and improper pipe installation. The result was a 20-foot hole in the dam with the sections of pipe deposited in the woods below. Thank goodness there wasn't a house immediately downstream!

Neglecting an infestation of aquatic weeds (top) can have a dramatic effect in a short amount of time. Expenses increase and home values decrease. Comparing these two photos, you can see how the condition of a pond can make an impact on your perception of a home's value. Note your improved perception of the homes (bottom) once it is cleaned up.

Finally, overfertilization of lawns and landscapes leads to nutrient runoff into retention ponds, which can cause major blooms of algae. Mowing grass and directing grass clippings into the pond provides additional nutrients and physical material to fill the pond. Ducks and geese contribute to erosion and deposit manure in the pond. In fact, 25 resident Canada Geese will produce 13 tons of manure in a year. So think twice before feeding them corn and encouraging them. Pet waste gets washed into the pond, too. Ponds attract and retain litter. Storm drains accumulate it and send it to the pond. Toy balls, ketchup packets, grocery bags, Styrofoam (peanuts, cups, takeout boxes) and cans can all end up in ponds, and we remove them simply because no one else will.

Seeing that we can't magically fix people and their habits, their general ignorance about ponds will always be a challenge. Just be prepared to educate and navigate people and their perceptions and personalities as you engage in water. ☺

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## About the Author

**Ken Rust** has managed ponds, lakes and water features for 24 years, specializing in design and installation of aeration equipment. His aquatic career began in 1994 after graduating in fisheries and aquaculture from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Ken provides sales and design of aeration equipment and maintains ponds and lakes through his company, Louisiana Pond Management. His latest venture is Small Scale Aquaponics, which provides high-quality, science-based aquaponics systems and supplies. Ken enjoys giving talks on pond management and aquaponics, cooking, playing the fiddle and gardening, while raising five daughters with his wife Brooke in Baton Rouge.



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# Fire on the Water

Mixing the elements in water features

by **Shane Hemphill,**  
Art of the Yard

## The Inspiration

**W**hat's better than going out with your family on a warm summer evening with graham crackers, marshmallows and a chocolate bar in hand to make a tasty dessert and create lifelong memories?

The addition of a water feature, of course! You can do just that with the fire and water table. I designed this table approximately 12 years ago with no specific project in mind. The table was initially designed to be a functioning outdoor dining table and water feature combination. I was waiting for the right opportunity for this project to come to fruition. About three years later, we started doing custom fire pit installations with a company called Flame Designz based in Denver, Colorado. In a meeting about a custom fire pit, I asked James Dimasi if you could mix a fire element into a water feature. As he described the process, the fire and water table immediately came to mind. James and I then stated collaborating to come up with concepts for this one-of-a-kind water feature.

Before we had the opportunity to build the fire and water table, we received a lead for a custom water wall with fire at the basin. This was a very challenging project, because multiple contractors had started the project and then could not finish.

We were called in mid-project to come up with a solution. We contacted our metal fabricator to create a custom, stainless steel water basin that would house the fire element and pump system, while at the same time allowing for the gas line to enter the feature and create a watertight seal to ensure no leaks. We also had to run the water line from the pump up to a custom weir that would create a water-wall effect. The structure for the feature had already been built without plumbing, so we had to drill into the wall and snake our pipework through it to make the connection from the pump to the custom weir.

This ended up being a beautiful, one-of-a-kind feature that made for an amazing entry piece to the home. After building this project, we had a much better understanding of the difficulties and challenges we would encounter building the fire and water table.

The fire and water table (top) ignites the evening. The family eats 90 percent of their meals here during the summer. The table is shown during construction (bottom, left), serving as a reminder that planning is a crucial part of delivering a custom piece. The entry point (bottom, right) for the water to flow through the patio is shown here. Coming up with a solution that would keep the patio in place while allowing the water to flow through was the most difficult part.





The family's dog (above, left) loves to drink out of the table. The family says they have been amazed by how this feature has brought the family together, including the pets. The water for the table runs through the trough (above, right). You will notice the copper stripping that was installed to keep the table from singeing. Also shown in the photo is the gas bubble igniting and the ignition.

### Fire & Water Come Together

Then we came across the perfect project for the fire and water table. A homeowner was looking for a new patio and a standout water feature. I showed the homeowner concepts for the fire water table, and they immediately fell in love with the idea. The original design was to create the table with a granite or poured-concrete top. The homeowner's style was more rustic, so we found some 100-year-old reclaimed barn wood that fit the bill.

The first challenge was how to create the water basin underneath the patio so that there would be only one basin to collect water from both sides of the table, allowing us to only use one pump to supply water to the table. We also wanted to create a seamless look. We knew that the homeowner wanted Pennsylvania blue flagstone for the patio, so we had to create a trough thin enough so that the flagstone would span the basin. Plus, we had to create a basin strong enough to support the weight of the flagstone for the patio.

We did this by digging a trough deep enough for two Eco-Blox to stack on top of each other and set just underneath the

flagstone for support, while also holding the underlayment and liner in place. Then our pump vault went directly underneath the spillways from the table. Next, we had to run our gas line for the burner, our low voltage wire for our underwater lights, and the electrical wire for the self-igniter underneath the patio.

The next challenge that we faced was how to create the entry point for the water to flow from the table into the basin through the patio. We did this by cutting a hole in the patio just above the pump vault and inserting a stainless steel ring that was deep enough to keep the road base and prevent any sand from the patio from entering the basin. Then we mortared the ring into place and filled in both rings with black Hawaiian cobblestones to give a contrast from the patio. This created a visual contrast from the patio to reduce a tripping hazard. Then we leveled the table to create an even flow from both ends of the table.

Now we were ready for a test run. Two things that we did not count on were the amount of splash from the table that would get onto the patio, and the fact that the flames would flow along with the water past our metal fireguard,

**This ended up being a beautiful, one-of-a-kind feature that made for an amazing entry piece to the home. After building this project, we had a much better understanding of the difficulties and challenges we would encounter building the fire and water table.**

thus singeing the table. We remedied this by extending the metal fireguards down the entire length of the table and reducing the splash by adding splash rings where the water was falling into the basin.

Now the project was complete, and it ran the way we wanted to. We gave the homeowner not only a great water feature but also a focal point for the entire backyard. The family says they eat almost every meal during the summer surrounded by their new outdoor oasis. They have had guests over on multiple occasions, and they never want to leave, because the yard is so relaxing and inviting. Something that the homeowner did not expect was that the table would become their three dogs' new favorite watering hole.

### How Does it Work?

The homeowners say the question that they get asked the most is, where does the flame come from? And how does it work? There is an igniter that sits just above the water surface to ignite the gas bubbles. Just below the water's surface, there are five ceramic fingers that disperse the gas evenly into bubbles. Then, as the gas bubbles reach the surface, they are ignited

into flames. The family says that they get more enjoyment out of the table than they ever could have imagined. Not only does it give them a great outdoor dining experience, but it also brings the family closer together, which is really what living the pond life is all about.

So when you go to create your own fire and water feature, just remember that the only limitation is your imagination. Features that have fire and water elements can range from large custom features to simple spillway bowls with fire incorporated. Art of The Yard is in the process of designing multiple features that incorporate both fire and water elements, from cored spillway rocks as a freestanding feature, to new additions to an existing water feature, to a fire and water table that would allow you to grow your own herbs for dinner right on the table through hydroponics. Art of the Yard's experience shows that customers are looking more and more for contemporary, one-of-a-kind water features. This can be a great way to expand your business and show off your skills. By being a one-of-a-kind piece of art, pricing and profit margins will increase. So, be creative and allow your water features to come to life. ☺

### About the Author

**Shane Hemphill** and **Heath Webb** have been building water features together for the past 20 years. Nine years ago, they starting their own company, Art of the Yard. By combining their friendship and experience, they have created a company that cares deeply about quality of work and customer service, while also creating one-of-a-kind works of art. Art of The Yard is an Atlantic Professional Contractor, a Helix Certified Contractor and the proud recipient of the 2018 Atlantic Professional Contractor of the year award. Check out Art of the Yard on Facebook and Instagram (@artoftheyard), on the web at [www.artoftheyard.com](http://www.artoftheyard.com) or direct at 303/204-0456.



The water, gas and electrical systems (top left) were constructed to keep the table water-tight. Referring to the fire and water wall (middle, left), the homeowner said she couldn't imagine a more inviting entrance. She said guests come to the house and just stand at the front door in awe. The wall was under construction (bottom, left) when we were brought into the project, and it was very difficult with no water lines in the wall trying to figure out how to make the system work. The mission was eventually accomplished!

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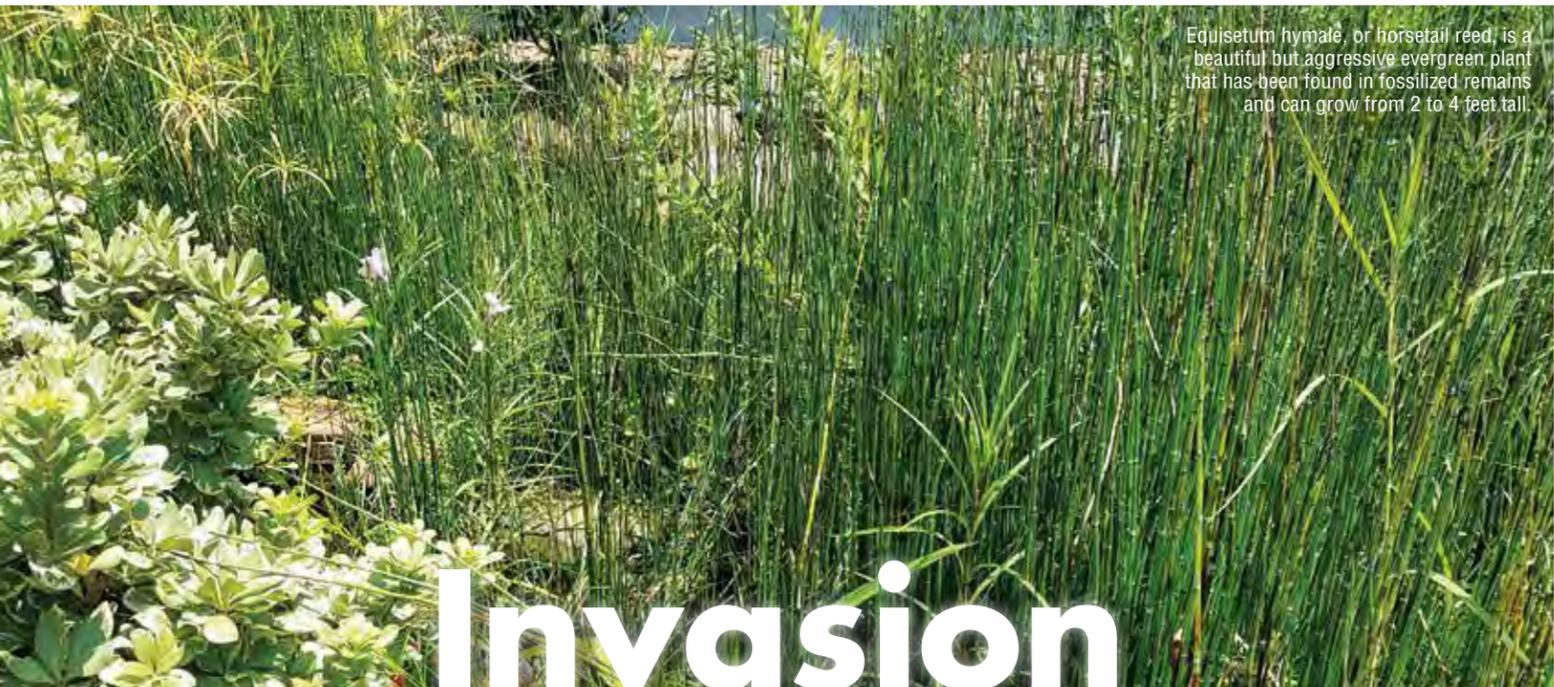
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*Equisetum hyemale*, or horsetail reed, is a beautiful but aggressive evergreen plant that has been found in fossilized remains and can grow from 2 to 4 feet tall.

# Invasion

## of the Pond Snatchers The scoop on invasive plant containment

by **Mark Gibson**,  
Green Thumb Garden Center

When I was 10 years old living in the southeast corner of Missouri, I learned the fine art of picking up a hoe, the trade of chopping cotton and soybeans and the definition of a weed.

My father would drive down the turn row and ask if I saw any plants that were not cotton. I'd reply that I saw maybe 10. He would reply, "Well, that's 10 to

many!" Our banker who gave us the crop loan would drive by to see if we were living up to our side of the bargain and keeping the unwanted plants (or weeds) down so that the cotton could get the maximum benefit of nutrients.

Fortunately, the days of getting to the field at 6 a.m. to chop down anything that was not cotton are long gone. But every year, reports of nuisance outbreaks occur because an enthusiast wants to rid their pond plant population by dumping unwanted plant material into canals or bodies of water, where the growing

environment is conducive for rampant, unchecked growth. Total eradication of some plants is nearly impossible once they have started growing.

### Prevention & Containment

There are a few simple ways to control the movement of these plants. Make sure to wash all boats and trailers thoroughly when leaving waterways. Destroy excess plant material; don't just throw it away in an uncontained body of water. Also, educate people that non-native species can be more than just a nuisance — they can have a negative economic impact on local bodies of water.

Above all, think prevention and containment. Consider aggressive plant species like a sunburn. The easiest way to avoid the hassle is to stay indoors and prevent the sunburn altogether. Once you have a sunburn, all you can do is contain what you have and not making the burn any worse. Many of these plants are considered invasive because they are difficult to eradicate and can thrive in contaminated environments. Excess nutrients and fertilizer runoff spill into local waterways, causing the water to become nutrient-rich environments for certain species of invasive plants, while contaminating the water for other plant and animal growth.

### Plants to Keep in Check

**Hydrilla verticillata** is a submerged plant that can be as much of a problem as nut sedge is in your lawn. It is a plant that can grow in water just a few inches deep, all the way down to 30 feet deep. The leaf has a saw-

tooth edge, and the underside is rough, unlike other submerged oxygenators such as elodea or anacharis. It was introduced as an aquarium plant in Florida during the 1960s. One particular batch was deemed unsatisfactory and dumped into a canal, where it rapidly flourished. This plant can tolerate freezing-cold temperature as well as lake draw-downs. It grows aggressively, even choking out other species of plants by reducing the oxygen and nutrient levels. It is spread by fragmented pieces drifting into other bodies of water. It has been found as far south as Texas and as far north as Canada.

**Cattails** are aggressive plants that multiply by rapidly growing rhizomes and seed. There are two main varieties: *Typha latifolia*, the broad-leaf variety, and *Typha angustifolia*, the narrow-leaf variety. They grow in shallow bodies of water generally 1 ½ feet or less in depth. These plants can grow from 3 to 10 feet quickly. It is common to see them take over entire streams and ponds. They can be found from the bays of the Great Lakes down to Texas.

**Water canna** (*Canna flaccida*) is known for its large, flat, green leaves that unfurl from long stems, which typically grow between 6 to 9 feet tall. They are topped by large, brightly colored red, orange and yellow flowers. It multiplies by rapidly growing perennial rhizomes. It grows submerged in muddy or sandy areas that protect the rhizomes from freezing-cold air temperatures.

**Water lettuce** (*Pistia stratiotes*) is a floating plant that is composed of thick, green leaves that grow in a rosette shape around long, white roots that are submerged under the water



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surface. They reproduce asexually, which means the plant quickly makes multiples of itself by sprouting several daughter plants that are connected by short stems called stolons. Once the stolon is cut, the daughter plant becomes a new, independent plant that produces several daughter plants of its own, and so on. These are highly aggressive plants that can easily overtake a lake or stream within months! This nuisance

other plant life by smothering them out.

The lotus, or Nelumbo, is a favorite of many pond keepers, with its lovely, large foliage and colorful blooms. Left unchecked, this plant can rapidly grow and take over an entire pond. We regularly use this plant, but we keep it in check in a large plastic or net pot.

Most waterlilies today are hybridized varieties, such as the wild

**Destroy excess plant material; don't just throw it away in an uncontained body of water. Also, educate people that non-native species can be more than just a nuisance – they can have a negative economic impact on local bodies of water.**

species thrives on water contaminated with sewage and fertilizers and eventually strangles out other plant and animal life by blocking sunlight, causing oxygen and nutrient depletion. If all that wasn't enough, they are known havens for mosquitoes and mosquito larvae.

**Umbrella palm** (Cyperus alternifolius) has long, thick stems that can grow up to 8 feet tall. They are topped with a tuft of leaves that look like umbrellas. This plant has survived many winters in Arkansas while continuing to proliferate. Our garden center planted a single gallon of this plant, and seven years later, it had to be removed from our pond with a forklift. The original pot had disappeared, while the plant seemed to free-float in water. This one plant weighed more than 1 ton when it was removed.

**Water clover** (Marsilea mutica) resembles a four-leaf clover, but this invasive species is actually a fern. This plant grows thick tufts of clover that thrive in boggy, muddy and sandy areas. It multiplies by producing spores and spreading its thick vegetation across an area. They are aggressive growers that will overtake

**waterlily** (Nymphaea odorata). These varieties generally remain in check because they reproduce asexually. Wild seeds from the bloom of the Nymphaea odorata are viable. Considering that the plant will have one to two blooms per week with seeds, it can shortly overtake any waterway.

The **yellow flag iris** (Iris pseud-acorus) has long, thin, flexible leaves that stand tall above the water level, resembling an ornamental grass. It has bright-yellow, three-petal blooms. These aggressive plants multiply by rapidly growing rhizomes and dispersing them into the surrounding environment. It can easily overgrow a waterway within months.

**Lizard's tail** (Saururus cernuus) grows long, red stems covered in large, green leaves that can reach up to 4 feet tall. It produces a soft, white bloom that is long and curved, resembling an animal's tail. They are native to North America and can thrive in shallow or deep waters.

**Evergreen water celery** (Oenanthe javanica) is one of the few water plants that is prolific even in the winter. It can grow quickly



Water Poppy



Water Celery



Yellow Flag Iris



Waterlilies, if left unchecked, can and will multiply by both seeds and rhizomes. They can take over any body of water.

enough to choke any waterway if not controlled. Fortunately, the plant is a favorite of koi. It can grow in our area at a rate of up to 2 feet per week!

**Horsetail reed** (*Equisetum hyemale*) grows long, green, vertical, hollow stems with rough, black bands about every 2 inches, indicating the joint. They multiply by producing spores and creating long runners underneath the soil that can grow under or around concreted areas, producing new stalks as it goes. It can thrive in small spaces and is very popular in Asian-inspired designs. This

plant can withstand most winters and has been found across North America.

**Parrot's feather** (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) grows long vines that are covered in tiny, green, feather-like leaves. It can grow up to 2 feet above the water level and will spread as far as it can. It has been known to smother out other plant life by blocking sunlight and causing oxygen and nutrient depletion in waterways. It can also clog up streams and other waterways with its dense foliage. They multiply from its perennial rhizome or from segments of the plant that have

been cut off, so trimming the plant back will actually cause new plant growth. It tolerates most herbicides and thrives in nutrient-rich, warm water. This plant is most often found in the southern United States, but it has been found as far north as Massachusetts.

**Pickerel rush** (*Pontederia cordata*) has long, green stems surrounded by green, shiny leaves that reach up to 6 feet tall. It produces a cone flower that has many small, purple blooms. They multiply by perennial rhizomes and seeds dispersed into the surrounding



Water Lettuce



Parrot's Feather

environment. This plant can thrive in unfavorable environments where other aquatic plants cannot.

**Water poppy** (*Hydrocleys nymphoides*) has shiny, green leaves that rest upon the water surface, along with soft-yellow blooms. It grows aggressively in warm, wet climates and can overgrow the water surface within months. They multiply in fragments, starting new plant growth. They are found in the southern parts of the United States.

### Don't Forget...

The important thing to remember is that invasive species are easily controlled if you follow these two steps: prevention and containment. If you can prevent the plant growth in the first place, there won't be any need to control overgrowth or seed and spore dispersal.

But if you're like me and enjoy these beautiful species, the other step is

containment. Place your invasive plant species into pots or containers, and that will create a physical barrier between the plant's reproductive rhizome or runners and the surrounding environment. If you plant these species into your soil, gravel, bog or other warm, wet environment, they will grow unchecked and can overtake the surrounding waterway within months. Also, once many of these species have established their rhizomes or root systems, they are nearly impossible to contain, since the rhizome is protected from surface temperatures and herbicides. Others have seeds or spores that can remain dormant until the ideal growing environment is achieved, and then they begin new growth without the aid of humans. As long as the invasive plant species are properly contained and managed, they make a beautiful addition to any water feature that will last for years to come. ☞

### About the Author

**Mark Gibson** is a lifelong horticulturalist. After he realized that chopping cotton was not the life he wanted, he went to college and received a degree in computer science. He has been active in the retail garden space since 1974, when his family purchased a small garden center with the Green Thumb moniker. In 1995, he started a retail division devoted to ponds, fish and water plants. He is an enthusiastic gardener who, along with his sister, owns and operates Arkansas' only exclusive water garden center. They have a combined 80 years of retail, horticultural and aquatic experience.



Bamboo is pretty, but pretty soon it will be all over and in this pond.

## Don't Get Bamboozled

By Max Taylor, Magnolia Ponds

So you have come home exhausted, poured your choice of evening beverage and sit down to enjoy your backyard. From across the way, you can see Mrs. Kravitz with drapes to one side,



Running bamboo can easily be identified by a flat side on the cane.

peering over to see what you are doing. You sigh and say to yourself, "I have do something about our privacy. What can we do to create a screen?"

The quickest solution that many jump to is bamboo! It grows quickly and thickens in a short time. Within a season, you'll have your nosy neighbor shopping for a drone to continue their reconnaissance efforts. But, beware. This solution can often create worse problems. In the United States, we can break down our bamboo into two basic groups: clump-

ing and running. The names are self-describing. The clumping bamboo grows in clumps. While the clumps will increase in diameter, they will remain in the main proximity of their planted area. Running bamboo, on the other hand, is the wild child that will cause havoc. It will grow quickly and create the screen in no time. However, running bamboos have leptomorph rhizomes that run horizontally under the ground. New buds and roots emerge from the nodes of these rhizomes. And before you know it, the neighbors are enjoying the bamboo growing in their yard. It is popping up in your flower bed, your lawn and "Oh, no! Not in my tomatoes!" If you have a pond with a liner, the rhizomes are pointed and hard enough to pierce the EPDM.

If you ever want prescribe a solution of bamboo, here is the simplest method of identifying the two groups. Run your hand around the cylindrical shape of the bamboo shaft. If it has a flat area rather than a near-perfect circle, you have the evil wild child of running bamboo. If the shaft is circular with no flat spots, you have a species of clumping bamboo. Even though clumps can begin to get larger than you want, it will not suddenly appear, growing through your living room carpet.

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| Language of **Koi** |

# Sleeping Disease

## Is it the common flu in koi?

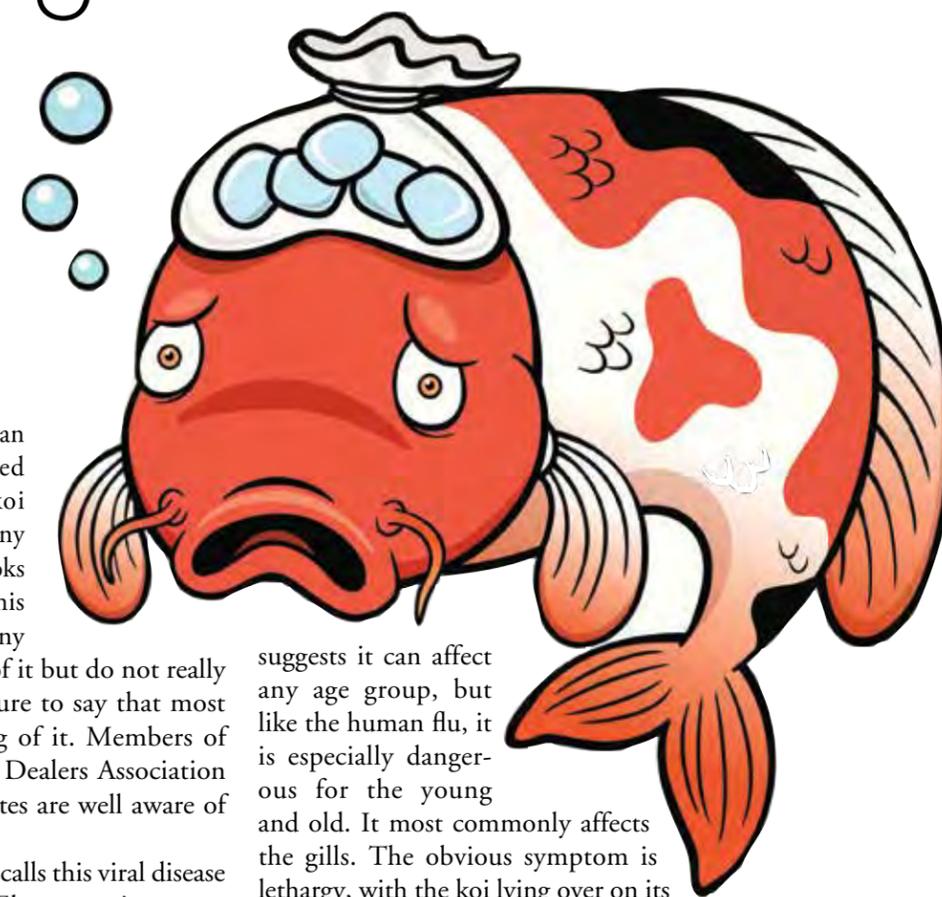
by **Ben Plonski,**  
Laguna Koi Ponds

**K**oi sleeping disease is an infrequently discussed viral disease in koi that has been around for many decades. Most koi health books written in Japan mention this disease, but it seems that many U.S. koi dealers have heard of it but do not really understand it. I would venture to say that most koi hobbyists know nothing of it. Members of the Shinkokai Breeders and Dealers Association in Japan and the United States are well aware of this disease.

The scientific community calls this viral disease Carp Edema Virus (CEV). Electron microscopy suggests it is a pox virus. It seems to only affect koi. I would compare it to the common human flu. Koi may succumb to it with new additions to the pond, in times of stress and in cooler water below 70 degrees. If misdiagnosed or left untreated, koi can die — especially younger koi. If properly diagnosed and treated early, it can be easy to treat. Note that there is a limited number of scientific studies for this disease. The anecdotal information in this article comes from 30 years of importing koi.

### Diagnosing Sleeping Disease

Sleeping disease is most commonly associated with 1-year-old koi, or tosa. Anecdotal evidence



suggests it can affect any age group, but like the human flu, it is especially dangerous for the young and old. It most commonly affects the gills. The obvious symptom is lethargy, with the koi lying over on its side with fins clamped, as if it is sleeping. The koi may also appear to be floating at the surface on its side or hanging with its tail down or up. Because it affects the gills, in advanced stages, the eyes may appear to be sunken in. In general, the fish will have excessive white mucus over the entire body and in the gills. If left untreated, these symptoms may persist for over a week before koi begin to die.

These symptoms can be similar to a parasite infestation. Sleeping disease will affect weak koi, and so quite often, parasites will be present as well. Proper diagnosis requires ruling out parasites with a microscopic exam. The virus is not easily controlled by the typical parasite medicines on the market. So regardless of whether or not you have treated for

parasites, the koi just get worse. Because the eyes are sunken and gills affected, it could also be misdiagnosed as a bacterial gill disease. However, with bacterial gill disease, the koi do not typically lay over as if they are sleeping. That being said, the longer the sleeping disease is left untreated, the more likely bacteria will begin to grow in the gills and end up being what eventually kills the fish.

### Early Treatment

Think of it in this way: it's as if the koi catch the flu, and if left untreated, it can turn into pneumonia. So, diagnosing it is a process of elimination, but be careful with diagnosing based on assumptions. Otherwise, as panic sets in, it can be commonly misdiagnosed as Koi Herpes Virus, or KHV. KHV is not easy to treat, but sleeping disease is easy to cure if treated early.

Because this disease is worldwide, koi breeders in Japan will purposely inoculate their 1-year-old tosaï koi with this virus in

### The longer the sleeping disease is left untreated, the more likely bacteria will begin to grow in the gills and end up being what eventually kills the fish.

order to build natural immunity. When baby koi are around five to six months old, the breeder will add one or more 2-year-old koi to the same tank as the babies. These 2-year-old koi were previously exposed and naturally immunized to the virus. The baby koi catch the virus and exhibit symptoms of sleeping, floating or hanging at the surface. White mucus is evident, and gills become pale. At this point, the breeder raises the water temperature to between 76 to 82 degrees. Rock salt is added to the pond at a dose of 0.5 percent (or up to 0.7 percent). Occasionally antibiotics like nitrofurazone or Elbagin are added to help prevent secondary bacterial infection. The elevated temperature increases the immune response.

Basically, the heat gives the fish a fever.

The rock salt dries out the excess mucus, which is very important. In my experience, the mucus in the gills causes additional weakening, since the fish will have difficulty breathing and osmoregulating. The longer the koi struggles with excess mucus in the gills, the more likely it will get a gill bacterial infection. The salt is a wonderful aid in helping weak gills. Within a few days to a week, although some koi will die, most of the baby koi will have recovered. The longer the babies stay in the elevated temperature and rock salt, the stronger the immunization will be.

Because it is similar to the flu virus, the koi are not really strong enough to sell for a few weeks. Once the babies have gone through this immunization and recovered, the breeder will actually announce to the buyer that the koi have received the sleeping disease and are ready to sell. If his babies have not gone through this immunization, the breeder will notify the buyer to please wait until the process is finished.

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## Beyond Immunization

One would think that all would be well once the babies have been naturally immunized. But as with most things involving nature, and especially koi and viruses, you cannot let your guard down. Recent discussions with multiple breeders in Japan indicate that there may be more than one strain of sleeping disease. Again, similar to the flu, a different strain pops up every few years. After all, viruses are always mutating. In fact, it has been suggested that multiple strains of sleeping disease may exist around the world. So, a domestic koi could be immune to its own strain of sleeping disease but not to one from Japan or Taiwan, and vice versa. Koi coming from a certain breeder may not be immune to a strain found in the koi coming from another breeder. In fact, if



One-year-old koi are prone to sleeping disease.

we take it another step, the koi you purchased five years ago may have natural immunity to the virus from five years ago, but not to today's virus.

Fortunately, koi between 2 and 4 years old are very strong if kept in a healthy pond. So we don't typically see mature koi getting sleeping disease

from new babies. However, koi isolated for five years or more may indeed catch this disease from any new koi.

Most koi dealers and experienced hobbyists know of the syndrome whereby one new koi is added to an older, isolated population, and all the old koi get sick, but the new koi remains

fine. Some of you may call this the "koi in the plastic bubble" syndrome. All the older koi lay on the pond floor or float. They stop eating, get covered in mucus and will die if nothing is done. No parasites can be found under the microscope. Could this also be sleeping disease? I believe it is. I say this simply because I have been able to treat this "old koi versus new koi" disease with warm water and salt at 0.5 to 0.7 percent every time. Remember, treating early is key. If you have a customer with older fish and no new additions for more than four years, you should look out for this problem and help the customer avoid difficulties.

## Dealer's Quarantine Protocol

The most common occurrence of sleeping disease is at the dealer's facility with new ship-

ments of young koi during the springtime. This ailment is treatable if you are prepared for it and treat early, as in preventively.

First, heat the quarantine pond to 76-82 degrees. Add rock salt at a rate of 5 pounds per 100 gallons to a concentration of 0.6-0.7 percent. Keep koi in this temperature and salt level for a minimum of two weeks.

If you get koi from multiple sources, you can introduce a few fish from each batch together to purposely inoculate. Maintain the mix with temperature and salt for two to three weeks.

## Hobbyist Pond Protocol

For hobbyists who do not have plants or excess algae in their pond, wait to add koi until the warm summer months or early fall, unless there are heaters present. Temperatures and immune systems will be high. Mixing new koi with old koi in the winter may prove difficult. Be sure that the old koi are nutritionally healthy and that the pond and filter are low in organic waste. This works a lot better in a clean-bottom pond versus a gravel-bottom pond.

Then, add rock salt. This step can only be done in a fish-only system. Do not add rock salt to a pond full of algae or aquatic plants. It will prove disastrous. For a fish-only system, add salt over two days to a dose of 40 pounds per 1,000 gallons. Check it with a new salt meter. This will bring the concentration to 0.5 percent. This is your minimum effective salt level. Over the next few days, add 10 more pounds per 1,000 gallons (50 pounds total) to a concentration of 0.6 percent. You can go up to 0.7 percent if needed. Keep this concentration for a minimum of two weeks after the koi are eating again.

If the pond has aquatic plants or an algae system, give the affected koi a daily salt bath in a separate tank. Add 1 pound of rock salt to 5 gallons of pond water in a separate tank. This will give a concentration of 2 percent. Gently catch the koi and transfer them to the salt bath. Bathe for two to four minutes, depending on the strength of the koi. A strong koi can handle five minutes, but a weak koi might need to

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come out in only one minute. Repeat the salt bath daily for one to two weeks. As the fish gets stronger, it can stay in the bath longer. Try to work up to four minutes. The strong

a formalin-malachite green treatment for a minimum of five doses or more. This also helps to reduce some mucus and prevent potential parasites or columnaris bacte-

Chloramine-T. The goal is to remove excess mucus in the gills. These treatments work better if the water temperature is above 72 degrees.

### Treat Proactively

Remember we are dealing with a virus, and there is no known treatment for viruses other than the natural immune system. The warm water strengthens the immune system, and the salt reduces the mucus so the fish can breathe and osmoregulate. You may not be able to wait for warm water. If you can add the salt in advance or shortly after the symptoms show, you can still have success with just the salt treatment alone. Warm water speeds up the process and builds immunity. Always treat proactively for best results. ☞



A heated quarantine room is ideal for treating sleeping disease.

salt helps dissolve the mucus on the gills.

Along with the daily salt bath, you can also dose the pond every three days with

ria. For an aquatic plant or algae pond, I have also heard success in using daily baths of Minn-Finn or potassium permanganate, or dosing with

### About the Author

**Ben Plonski**, a real lover of koi, has been in the koi business for 43 years. He has



been traveling to Japan for 25 years to hand-pick koi for sale in the U.S. market. He is a member

of the Shinkokai All Japan Nishikigoi Promotion Association (U.S. District) and president and owner of Laguna Koi Ponds, Niji-Yama Wholesale Koi and Matala USA. For more information, visit [www.lagunakoi.com](http://www.lagunakoi.com).

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# BREAKING NEWS!

## The 2019 Season Kicks Off with Exciting News in The Pond & Water Feature Industry

Anjon Manufacturing & Savio Engineering have united to become the premier manufacturer of professional pond & water feature equipment. We're proud to announce Savio skimmers, waterfalls, filters & weirs are, once again, all MADE IN THE USA! Quality & availability are better than ever!



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Introducing the world to the Aquascape lifestyle with a video camera and a beautiful pond. Photo credit: Weston Zimmerman

## Lights, Camera, Traction!

How video blogging can help enhance your business

**by Greg Wittstock,**  
Aquascape

**W**hen YouTube sensation Logan Paul mentioned in one of his video blogs, or vlogs, that he wanted a koi pond, my smartphone instantly blew up! I knew a little about who Logan Paul was. What I didn't know was how many of my friends followed him! Within 48 hours of his vlog hitting YouTube, I was in Logan's backyard designing his new Aquascape water feature. I had no idea how that encounter would be my first step into the new universe of vlogging.

One year and 250 vlogs later, I can honestly say that if I knew then what I know now, I would have been way too overwhelmed to start my vlogging journey. Thankfully, though, I was naive about the amount of work vlogging would take. Today, I couldn't be happier with the fruits of my labor and the traction it's producing for introducing the world to the Aquascape lifestyle. Still, the daunting and relentless task of creating compelling content four times a week is a grind not for the faint of heart.

### Getting Started

In 2012, we signed a contract with NatGeo Wild to produce the reality series "Pond Stars" to chronicle our

exploits as the world's largest decorative water feature company. I thought it would be the greatest promotional effort ever for Aquascape and our industry. It didn't take long — maybe the second day of filming — until I realized that my dreams for what the show could achieve might be in trouble.

The first sign something was amiss was during my very first on-the-fly interview, where I was handed a script written by the producer to read. The reality was that "Pond Stars" wasn't actually a reality show covering our projects; it was a scripted production in which we were low-paid "actors" being



The journey of vlogging about water features began with a pond installation for celebrity YouTuber Logan Paul and continued with a water feature for the famed Justin Beaver. Today, Greg Wittstock continues to travel the country and globe to showcase ponds, waterfalls and fountains installed by Certified Aquascape Contractors. Photo credit (top photo): Tim Boettcher

told what to do. I don't want to come off as bitter, as I ultimately believe that everything happens for a reason, but let's just say that I learned a lot about how Hollywood does business — and it's not for me!

### The Pivot

Fast-forward to fall 2017. Knowing I needed to leverage the pond build with Logan Paul, one of the top YouTubers in the world, I decided to launch my own YouTube channel titled "Greg Wittstock, The Pond Guy." Unlike Hollywood, though, I wanted my YouTube channel to be unscripted and follow my journey visiting some of the world's most beautiful, decorative water features. Better still, my channel would get to focus on the individual Certified Aquascape Contractors (CACs) throughout North America, and the myriad consumers who are uniquely living the pond life.

The concept of "Greg Wittstock, The Pond Guy" vlogs was simple, but the outcome was potentially game changing. In a nutshell, I show up to an area of the world, visit water features I've never seen before, meet homeowners I've never met, and let them, in their own unscripted way, describe what it looks and feels like to be a water feature owner. If their water features are appealing and their words are compelling, then maybe these vlogs could start to demystify water features to the general public. If "Greg Wittstock,

The Pond Guy" vlogs could achieve that outcome, then it would accomplish the very goal I've been working to achieve for the majority of my life — taking decorative water features mainstream!

### A Connected World

Never before in the history of time have we lived in a world as connected as it is today. That could be a good or bad thing, depending on how you utilize technology while keeping it from fully consuming you. The world waits for no one as it evolves, and it's quickly evolving away from traditional print, TV and radio. The Sunday paper is about as thick as a former weekday edition. People are cutting the cord on cable TV in masses. And when the radio is on, it's more often tuned into a streaming podcast or a commercial-free station. If you think home shows are the answer to finding customers, the dwindling attendance is a direct result of anything and everything being a mere Google search away while you're in the comfort of your own living room.

Times used to be a lot simpler, indeed. However, never has it been easier to get your message across to your customers. Everyone has a smartphone, which allows businesses to create on-brand messaging and content that can be shared directly with prospective customers through digital media. No longer are we at the mercy of third-party gatekeepers, whether it be traditional ads, home show organizers or the post office. It's a golden age

of opportunity for the pioneers who aren't afraid to venture into new waters.

### "I Love My Job!"

For all 52 weeks of 2018, I exclusively featured CACs on my vlog. I visited three countries, profiling 44 different and unique businesses, and showcased hundreds of one-

everyone we support to live out that mantra, because I believe it's the perfect elixir for when times get tough. When you're dealing with the inevitable struggles of business, it's easy to forget that we are truly blessed to be earning a living creating people's dreams.

Beginning in January 2019 and running through mid-April, we will feature the proj-



Cameraman Tony Alcalá films a visit to Tussey Landscaping, a Certified Aquascape Contractor and recipient of the Aquascape 2017 Artist of the Year award. Photo credit: Weston Zimmerman

of-a-kind, work-of-art, custom creations. Along the way, I developed a catch phrase that has become my calling card, ending every vlog with, "I Love My Job!" It's the perfect saying that embodies the spirit of how I feel visiting my customers and seeing their amazing work firsthand. What started with my vlog is carrying over to the marketplace as our 2019 Pondemonium theme. I want

ects our own Aquascape construction team created around the world over the last 27 years. We are the world's only manufacturer of water feature products that builds water features full-time, and all the projects we will showcase have served as the research and development division for the products we ultimately create for our customers. Beginning in mid-April, we will feature



Vlogging about the Aquascape lifestyle always includes showcasing how homeowners interact and enjoy their water features. Photo credit: Weston Zimmerman (top) and Tim Wood (left).

will expose whole new marketplaces to what we can do as water feature installers.

The only way to justify the immense effort and resource allocation to create hundreds of vlogs a year is to make sure it is tied into growing the business. One of the ways we are measuring the success of vlogging is by tracking conversions on our contractor-locator on our website, which is designed to connect CACs with consumers interested in getting a water feature. As of late, our CAC locator is generating the highest number of leads ever!

In addition to reaching potential customers, the vlog has proved beneficial for connecting CACs with career-oriented individuals who are inspired to create the backyard paradise we showcase in the vlogs. As every water feature business owner knows, finding qualified people who are motivated to be part of your team is one of the biggest challenges we face today. An unexpected benefit of vlogging is the exposure of what we do to a whole new audience who might want to do what we do.

Besides "Greg Wittstock, The Pond Guy," we still have our corporate site, "Aquascape Ponds," in addition to a third YouTube channel, "TEAM Aquascape," which takes viewers behind the scenes every week through an entire year in the trenches with the Aquascape construction crew. All of it is real, unscripted and fun, and it contributes to why — wait for it — I love my job! ☺

### About the Author



Also known as The Pond Guy, **Greg Wittstock** is the founder and CEO of Aquascape Inc., the leading manufacturer in the water features market. Since its inception in 1991, Aquascape Inc. has experienced incredible growth, appearing on Inc. magazine's list of 500 Fastest-Growing, Privately Held Companies in North America four years in a row (1999 – 2002). Greg appeared on the cover of Inc. magazine in 2003, along with a feature article about his leadership and entrepreneurial spirit.

# Lone Star Lilies

## Recap of the 2018 IWGS Symposium

by **Anita Nelson,**  
Nelson Water Gardens

The 2018 IWGS Symposium was held in San Angelo, Texas, from Sept. 16 to 18. The City of San Angelo could not have been more excited and welcoming to see the IWGS come back to their fair city.

Board members and those arriving early were treated to a mini tour of local gardens. Featured on this tour was an incredible palm collection and a home surrounded by a large moat filled with waterlilies. Another home on the tour featured a water garden that was incorporated into a rainwater collection system.

Everyone gathered in the lobby Thursday evening, and a short bus ride took us to the opening reception at the San Angelo Visitor Center. The fellowship and joy from all the members seeing each other again was palpable. People from

all walks of life and all parts of the world, from professional to hobbyist, mingled with the citizens of San Angelo. Following appetizers and live music, the group returned to the hotel. Each night the hospitality room was open for more fellowship.

### Education Day

We gathered Friday morning at the San Angelo Convention Center for presentations. The first presentation was given by Anthony Archer-Wills, who completely astounded the group with his amazing water garden installations. Kelly Billings spoke about planting streams, presenting new ways to think about them. Cuiwei Yu shared results from the breeding program for both *Nymphaea* and *Nelumbo* at Zhejiang Humanities Co. Ltd. Sijuan Li amazed us with his accomplishments in hybridizing so many cultivars on his rooftop garden. We heard from the Invasive Species Panel before





Heinjo Lahring spoke on the unique techniques he has developed on seed production of wetland plants in the short season in the bitter-cold zone 2. Then came the moment everyone was waiting for — visiting the International Waterlily Collection curated by Kenneth Landon. The weather was a little dicey at first, with thunderstorms and rain threatening, but a rainbow appeared, and all was well. Dinner was served from an authentic chuck wagon. There was lots of photography while the day bloomers were closing and the night bloomers were opening. The evening was topped off by an exclusive fire-

works show created by none other than Landon himself. **Day Two** Saturday morning found everyone up and ready to return to the collection for more fellowship and photography. After visiting the collection, the members were treated to lunch in downtown San Angelo and time to experience a little bit of Texas culture. The afternoon consisted of a presentation by Eamonn Hughes, who, like Anthony Archer-Wills, builds water gardens on a grand scale. It was interesting to see the different flavors of pond design, all of which were drool-worthy. The day's presentations

finished with Kenneth Landon sharing his techniques for growing the wonderful waterlilies at the International Waterlily Collection. Saturday was topped off with the Hall of Fame banquet held at the Museum of Fine Arts. There were two inductees into the Symposium this year, both who have contributed to the IWGS and water gardening in very different ways. "Ask Tish" is a phrase familiar to anyone on the IWGS Board. Tish has served the IWGS in many different capacities over the years, from president to treasurer. In addition, Tish and her husband hosted the 2012 Symposium



in Virginia. Through her efforts as a water garden business owner and volunteer extraordinaire, she has furthered the water garden hobby. In an entirely different way, our second honoree, Dr. Nopchai Chansilpa, has also furthered the water garden hobby through his amazing hybridizing efforts. Among others is his stunning hybrid Wanvisa, which won hybrid of the year in 2010. Wanvisa is simply breathtaking to the point of inspiring someone to build a water garden just to have this lily. Dr. Chansilpa has been exceedingly generous in his knowledge and techniques on hybridization.

### Sunday Fellowship

The next morning, the membership was granted exclusive entrance into the ponds to photograph the lilies up close and personal. Quite a few members took advantage of this, donning various interesting pond attire. In the end, it was a great symposium.

The weather cooperated by raining to cool things down. The rain graciously held off when we needed to be outside. The city of San Angelo donated time and treasure, from stuffing our tote bags to donating a group picture taken at the gardens. Speaking for myself more than anything, I enjoy the fellowship experienced at an International Water Garden Society symposium. No one is a stranger. Everyone is welcome. If you are new to the IWGS, you will be drawn into our warm embrace. Everyone attends in a spirit of friendliness and willingness to share our love for all things aquatic. ☞

*Anita Nolan Nelson, horticulturist, has always loved plants. As a child, she was fascinated by all the colors, shapes and forms of plants and still is to this day. She is co-founder of Nelson Water Gardens & Nursery, a specialty garden center in Katy, Texas, with her husband Rolf.*





**EasyPro Pond Products Announces New Aeration Kits**

EasyPro Pond Products of Grant, Michigan, is excited to announce a new line of aeration kits for ponds up to 3,500 gallons. The CAS Series kits provide dependable aeration and de-icing for water gardens and koi ponds. The quiet, energy-efficient compressors feature a sleek, compact design, adjustable airflow, an affordable price point and a two-year warranty.

- Three kit sizes are available:
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All kits are complete with compressor, airline, self-sinking diffusers and check valves.

For more information or to request a full-color catalog, call 800/448-3873 or visit [www.easypromo.com](http://www.easypromo.com).

**Society of Lake Management Professionals Announces 4th Annual Summit & Conference**

For many of the best minds in the lake management industry, the Society of Lake Management Professionals (SLMP) Annual Summit has quickly become one of the can't-miss events of the year. From Jan. 22-24, 2019, business owners, employees, vendors, and industry professionals will congregate in Memphis, Tennessee, for the fourth annual conference. Lake management professionals and enthusiasts will immerse themselves in learning and camaraderie in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. This year's summit promises to be one filled with interaction. From small group roundtable discussions to breakout technical sessions, large group presentations and fun Memphis nightlife, there will be something for everyone. All members of the lake and pond management industry are welcome to register for the summit, including companies small and large, government employees, vendors and manufacturers will all be represented. Please visit the SLMP website at [www.lakeprofessionals.org](http://www.lakeprofessionals.org) to learn more about the summit and register your spot before space is full.



**Living the Pond Life Quilt Raffle Will Benefit the American Cancer Society**

Cancer survivor and creator of the "Living the Pond Life" motto, Karrie Lightsey, has chronicled on Facebook her travels to Michigan to check on the progress of a commemorative quilt her sisters are creating.

This one-of-a-kind, handmade keepsake will be raffled off at Pondliner Wholesale's Water Garden Expo in Shawnee, Oklahoma, on February 22, 2019. Tickets will go on sale soon, and all proceeds will be donated to the American Cancer Society. For more information, visit @livewithkarrie on Facebook.



**Bacti-Twist Acquired by Blue Thumb**

Blue Thumb proudly announces the acquisition of Bacti-Twist. Bacti-Twist is a manufacturer of filtration media supplying the water garden and aquaculture industries. The addition of Bacti-Twist to Blue Thumb's complementary brands will enable Blue Thumb to offer all markets the most comprehensive lineup of professional-grade water feature equipment in the industry from a single source.

Blue Thumb is widely known in the water feature industry for its extensive line of professional PondBuilder equipment and other products focused on helping the landscape installer and retailer be more successful promoting and selling water features.

"We've been purchasing Bacti-Twist products for many years now," said Kip Northrup, president of Blue Thumb. "Our seasoned team at Blue Thumb, combined with years of market experience, translate to a better customer experience, stronger product offerings and increased quality — and we are very excited about that."

Blue Thumb is committed to a seamless transition and is in the process of moving all production and inventories from Bacti-Twist to their corporate headquarters in Saginaw, Michigan. The ability to ship Bacti-Twist media together with pond kits, pondless waterfall kits and other fountain equipment will provide an overall lower delivered cost and an expedited and efficient ordering process for customers.

For more information, contact Blue Thumb at 888/619-3474 or [www.bluthumbponds.com](http://www.bluthumbponds.com).



**Your Pond Farm Launches New Website**

Your Pond Farm, an industry leader in water gardening and pond supplies, is excited to announce the official launch of our website, [www.yourpondfarm.com](http://www.yourpondfarm.com). Built with our customers' evolving needs in mind, our new website has been designed to be user-friendly, convenient and informative.

Visitors can now conveniently browse all the top water-gardening product lines on one site. Their customers will be able to place orders and view inventory around the clock, stay up to date on industry news, see weekly deals, follow our blog, get tracking information the moment a product ships — and so much more!

"The goal is to provide our customers with full access to our product lines. Information, customer service and support are now just a click away," said John Holmes, vice president of Your Pond Farm.

For more information about Your Pond Farm, call 877/412-3276 or contact [sales@yourpondfarm.com](mailto:sales@yourpondfarm.com).

**Environmental Alternatives Introduces Line of Aquatic Probiotic Supplements**

For 30 years, Environmental Alternatives has been manufacturing the No. 1 selling blend of beneficial bacteria for pond use, Aqua-5 Dry. This year, we're excited to announce our new line of aquatic probiotic supplements!

The benefits of probiotics, especially lactobacillus acidophilus in aquaculture, have become evident through the results of numerous studies over the past several years. Probiotics improve the overall health, color, digestion, growth and immune systems in fish, and can even speed healing of wounds and diseases, taking the place of antibiotics and other medications.

Environmental Alternatives' new line of probiotic supplements, which includes Aqua-5 Plus and Aqua-5 Reef, is made with a top-of-the-line blend of five strains of lactobacillus acidophilus as the No. 1 ingredient. These strains have been selected for our supplements specifically for their suitability to aquaculture and the pond environment.

When added to fish food, Aqua-5 Plus works to improve fish health, color and vitality from the inside out, for pennies per application. There's no need to buy specialty probiotic fish food when you can add Aqua-5 Plus to your fish's favorite food! Similarly, Aqua-5 Reef is added to coral food to enhance color and digestion in coral, while preventing pathogens from taking hold.

To learn more about Aqua-5 Plus, Aqua-5 Reef and original Aqua-5 Dry, or for information about wholesale and distributorship opportunities, visit [www.env-alt.com](http://www.env-alt.com).



**Mike Mallon Named New Director of Retail at BioSafe Systems**

BioSafe Systems is pleased to announce that Mike Mallon has taken the new position of managing director of its retail segment. Mike will work closely with the BioSafe product development team in the continued creation of exciting, new, sustainable products and programs designed to solve consumers' problems in the pond, the garden and the home.

Mike can be reached at [mmallon@biosafesystems.com](mailto:mmallon@biosafesystems.com) or 860/729-8162.



**Outdoor Water Solutions Introduces AerMaster Ultimate Solar Aeration Systems**

Outdoor Water Solutions (OWS) is excited to introduce a new line of solar aeration systems to our product line. The new AerMaster Ultimate line of solar aerators is designed for ponds up to 35 feet deep and airline runs up to 500 feet per compressor.

Maximum depths, panel placement and airline length are always a concern when dealing with solar systems. Using our current rocking piston electric systems with our state-of-the-art controllers, we are able to provide a solution for these larger off-grid ponds and lakes. Available in 1/4, 1/2 and 3/4-Horsepower, these systems create many new off-grid job opportunities and produce four to five times more airflow than other competitive systems.

The Ultimate series is a direct-drive system and is designed to operate in early mornings, late evenings and moderate overcast conditions with its variable-speed controller, producing the maximum total daily cubic feet per minute. These systems are perfect for applications where electricity is too costly to run or install and when a client can't afford a full battery backup system.

OWS has paired these systems with a very simple, yet strong panel-racking system, which is rated at 90 mph wind speed. The systems will include everything except the mounting poles, which will need to be sourced locally. The high-output panels will come with quick cable disconnects, also speeding up installation time.

For more info, contact Joe Forman, national sales manager, at joe@outdoorwatersolutions.com or 870/213.7519.



**Blue Thumb Publishes 2019 Catalog**

Blue Thumb's 2019 wholesale catalog is now available and packed with more than 1,000 professional-grade fountains! With over 164 pages of equipment for fountains, pondless waterfalls and ponds,

this year's catalog is filled with projects for you to design, install and maintain profitably.

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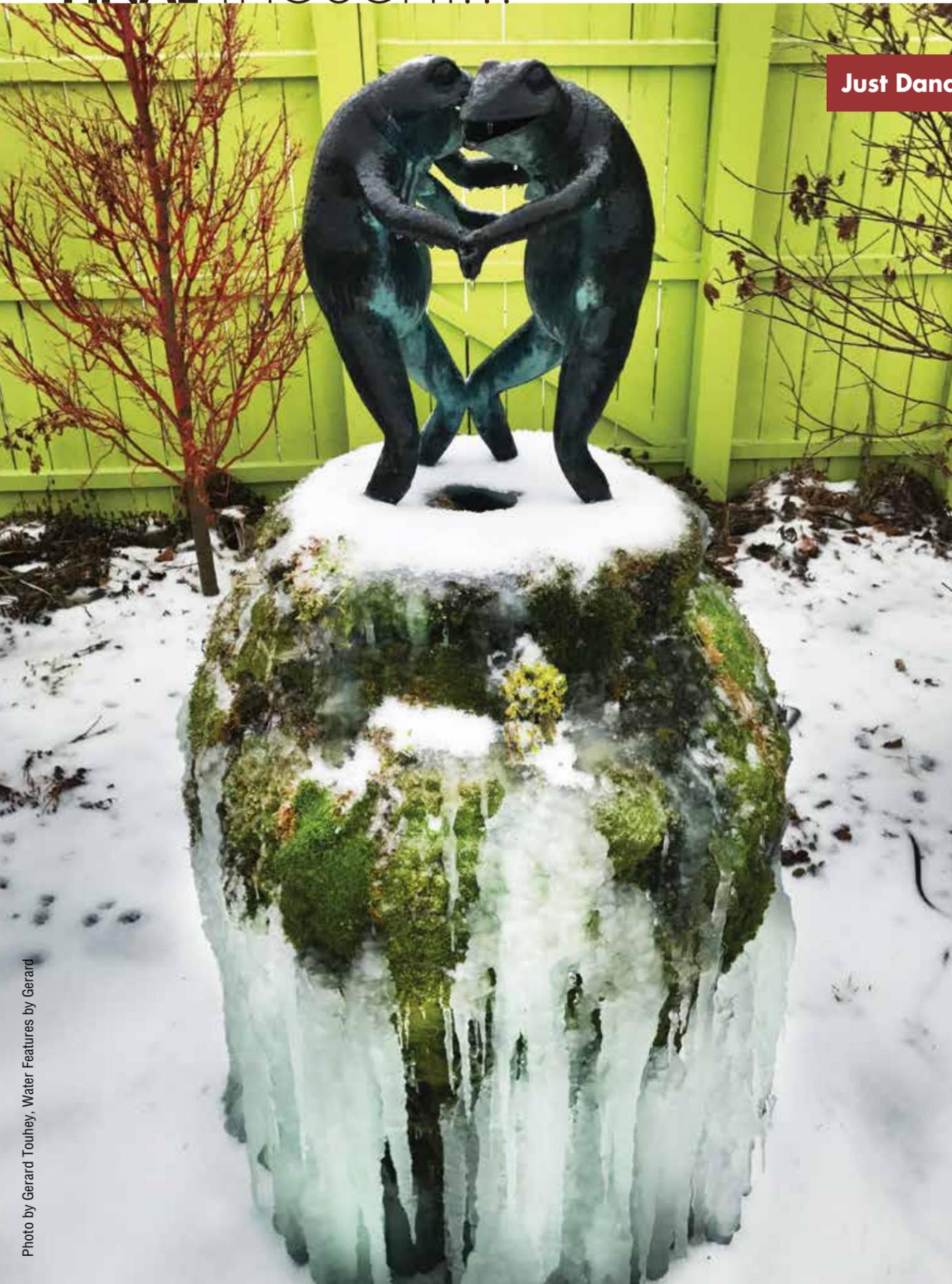
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