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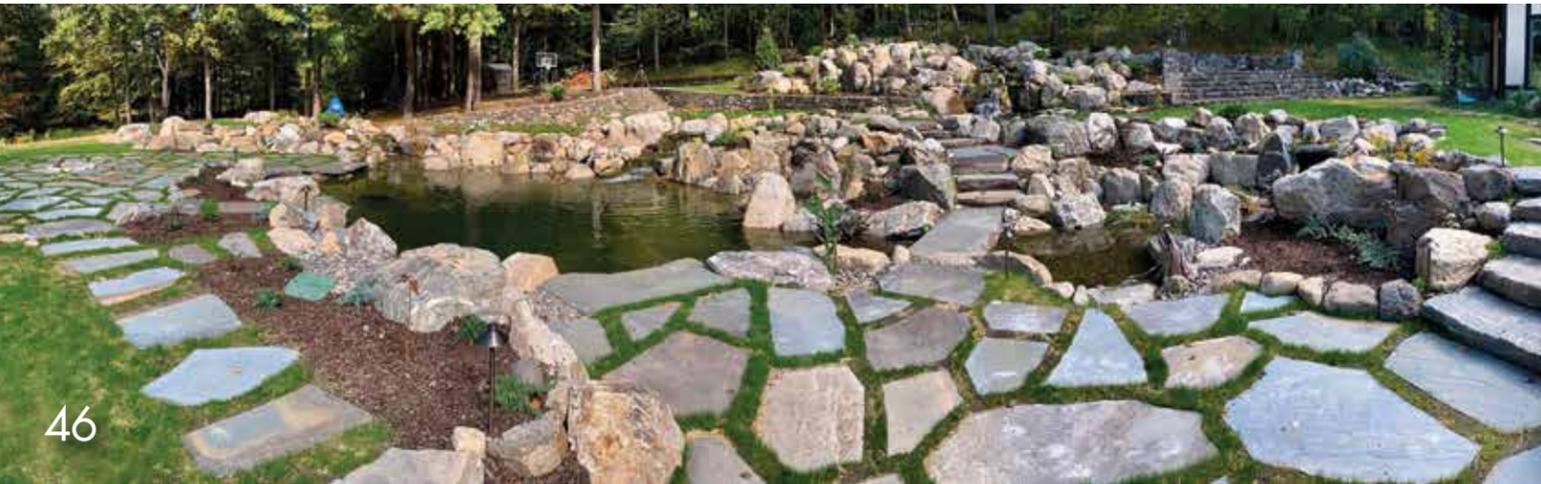
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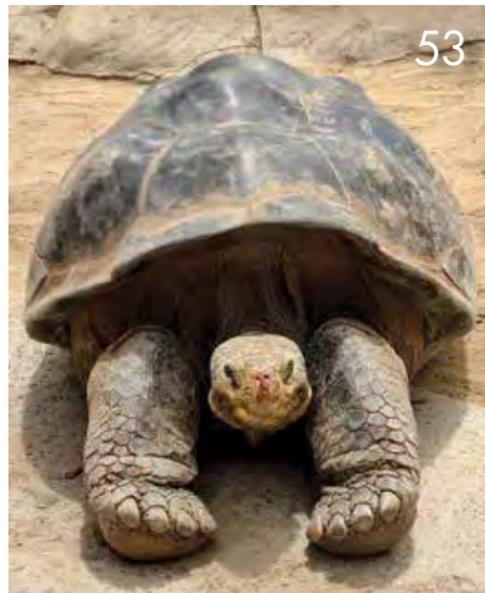
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Building a pondless waterfall for a tiny house community in rural Texas had its own set of unique challenges, recalls **Matt Griffin**. Today, the feature enhances the enjoyment factor for those seeking a simpler way of living.

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From the service industry to the pond-services industry, the COVID-19 pandemic has turned the workforce upside down. **Tom Grandy** shares advice on luring good workers back to their jobs.

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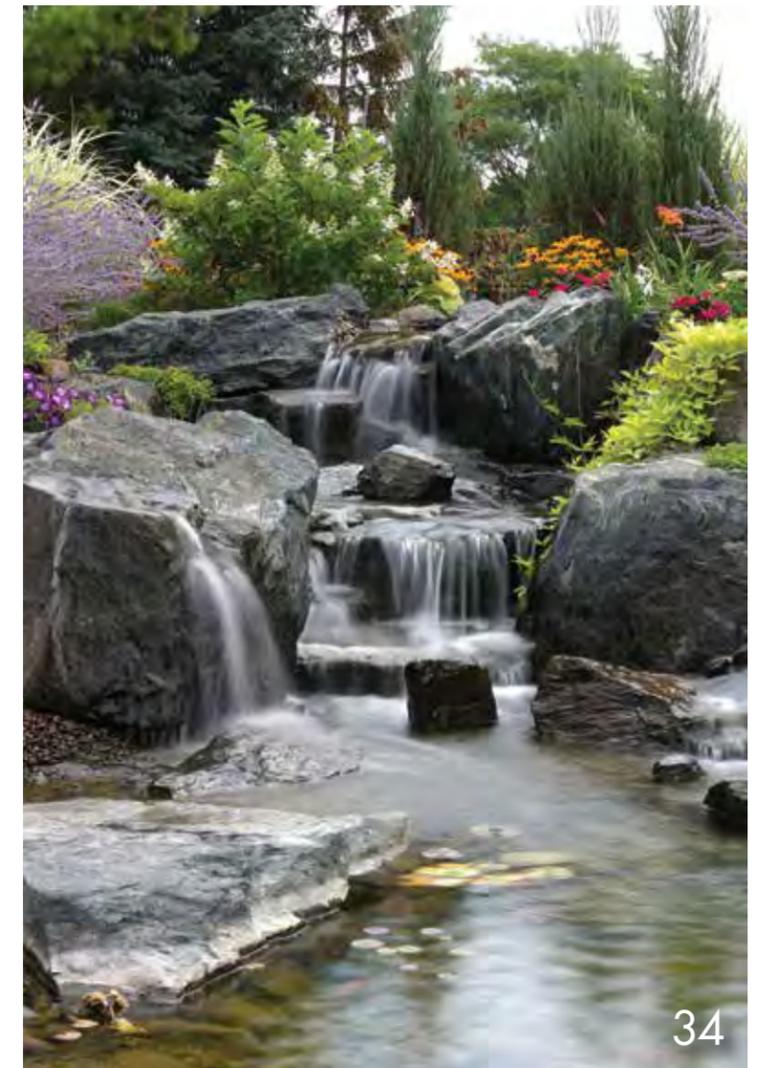
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Upcoming Events

2021

June 26 - September 11
Greater KC Water Garden Society Tour
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Six weekend tours, various homes
www.kcwatergardens.com

August 10 - 12
IGC Garden Center Show
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www.igcshow.com

August 27
Pondemonium Online
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www.pondemonium.com

October 6 - 8
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Cleveland, Ohio

October 13 - 14
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Publisher's Perspective

Want a Job?

Did I get your attention with that headline? I'll bet I did. Not to worry, I'm not selling or going anywhere, and our editors, Jordan and Grant, are staying put, too. I just wanted to touch on the hot topic — and growing complaint that I keep hearing from many of you — that you can't find or keep good help.



Who would have ever thought that we would come through a pandemic and end up with this problem? It's not unique to our trade, either. Restaurants and a lot of other service-related small businesses are feeling the squeeze when it comes to getting and staying fully staffed.

I'm sure you all have opinions on this topic; it's a complicated one, for sure. We are happy to have business expert Tom Grandy back this issue

("HELP, HELP!" pg. 13) with some advice on attracting high-quality employees back to your business. How has your business fared as the economy continues to come back? Stay in touch on our Facebook page or through email, and please feel free to share any advice you feel might be helpful for your fellow pond professionals. Let's rely on each other and hope that things return to normal soon!

As usual, we are packed this issue with lots of timely, stimulating topics from around the pond world. Jamie Beyer has an informative rundown of different pond edge designs ("Pondering the Perimeter," pg. 16) that might be a source for inspiration. We're also taking another look at recreation ponds ("Not Your Grandma's Pool," pg. 46) through the eyes of the Aquascapes East team of Dylan Arlotta and Tom Dieck. Alan Weene provides motivation for reaching for the stars ("Go Big or Go Home," pg. 34) when it comes to large-scale projects. Finally, you won't want to miss Mike Gannon's conservationist feature that goes with the beautiful frog on the cover ("Romancing the Pond," pg. 24), and if you still haven't satisfied your reptile fix, check out Kent Wallace's tortoise pond design ("Shell-Shocking!" pg. 53) in this issue's Best Pond Practices installment.

Happy PONDering!

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When Less is **More**

Pondless waterfall has big impact on tiny house community

by Matt Griffin,
PrimeLawn

Pondless waterfalls can create a big impact on any property. Over the years, we have had a lot of success designing and installing many pondless waterfalls. They fit into almost any space and provide a peaceful setting for the client's private enjoyment.

However, for this build, the enjoyment factor was anything but private.

Tiny House Craze

Since the 1970s, the tiny house movement has grown in popularity among those seeking a return to simpler living. By definition, a tiny house is a dwelling unit with no more than 400 square feet of floor area. Aside from affordability, the perks of living in a tiny house include environmental friendliness, a rustic lifestyle and a focus on community rather than the individual. As these small habitats are generally found in clusters, any outdoor project

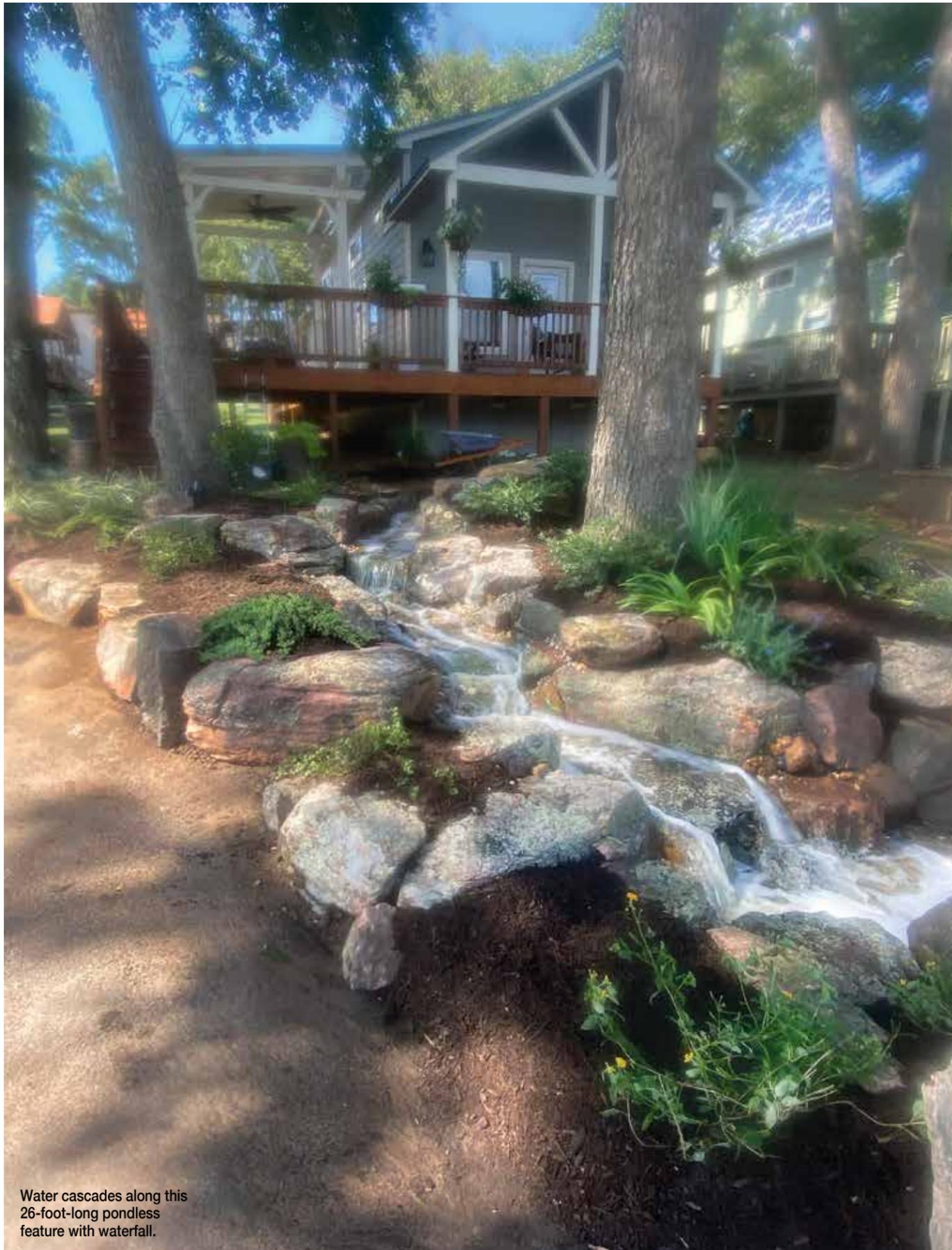
for a tiny home can be enjoyed by the greater community.

The Mackey family contacted us after settling down in a tiny house community in Willis, Texas. They had fallen in love with the concept of a pondless waterfall after watching countless hours of footage on YouTube, and they were envisioning something for all their new neighbors in the community to enjoy as well. They had a good idea of what they liked but had no idea how impactful it could really be.

A Unique Approach

We as designers are always thinking about aesthetics, but when we are building in a public area, we also need to think about durability and safety. During the planning process, it is important to talk with the clients about these things. Taking these elements into consideration as a designer will help the client understand why we do some of the things we do during the installation process.

For example, if someone likes to climb



Water cascades along this 26-foot-long pondless feature with waterfall.



The basin/pump vault for water storage is under construction.



Each boulder is set in place safely and quickly with an excavator in a way that looks natural.



The completed water feature still shimmers six months later.

all over the boulders, they need to be sturdy. If we are building a pooling area, I like to use Black Star gravel to create more of a beachlike entry to the vault. (Plus, the gravel will not slide under your feet!) Edging streams is a big part of making any water feature look natural. Outcroppings are also so important yet sometimes overlooked; we install them to balance out a new feature.

Gaps in the rocks are important so we can incorporate plants. Aquatic plants are a great way to soften edges from inside a stream and basin area. We also landscape around pondless features to fill in the natural design of the water feature. Blending helps to enhance the outcroppings while making the water feature fit into the existing landscape, just as if they had evolved together. We love including LED lighting packages in all our pondless waterfalls to create a space for outdoor entertainment and enjoyment beyond daylight hours and well into the evening.

Designing for Safety

As a Master Certified Aquascape Contractor, we use Aquascape products in our builds, like flow-control pumps and energy-efficient dosing systems that release bacteria into the water feature or pond automatically. Color-changing lights are also a great addition to any pond or water feature.

I not only wanted the Mackeys' pondless waterfall to stand out, but I also had to make sure it was safe for neighboring residents to visit and enjoy. We had about a 3-foot elevation change to work with, so we were able to create multiple drops and different types of waterfalls in different areas. We used Aquascape's SLD adjustable flow pump (5,000 – 9,000 gallons per hour), a solids-handling pump with Wi-Fi smart controls that can be controlled from a smart phone or tablet. We also integrated a dosing system that releases bacteria in small doses throughout the day. To finish it off, we added color-changing LED

lights that can be controlled from a smartphone.

The stone that we selected was Texas granite moss rock for its capability to provide interesting-looking boulders with moss, eroded edges and a neutral color that suits almost any project. Each boulder is machine set; this way, each stone is installed exactly how we

all the products, warranties, a catalog and other information for the feature we'd just installed. This is always of high value to the client, knowing that they have part numbers for items that they may need to replace in the future. We sat down with the client to go over warranties, maintenance and care of their feature, explaining in detail the



Water runs over the rocks, naturally creating a tranquil setting within the landscape.

want to see it in nature, creating a landscape that is natural looking to attract birds and nature to the space — yet still colorful to catch the human eye.

The biggest challenge on this project was maximizing the visibility of the waterfalls from so many directions with only 3 feet of elevation to work with. The waterfall cascades had to be just right, and I think we nailed it! The cascading falls are visible from all directions, capturing the eye of anyone walking by from even 100 feet away.

A Community Gem

This project was started and completed in three days, including the landscape work. We really wanted to design and build out not just the feature, but also the landscape. The landscape is the finishing touch and a very important part of the project, softening the boulders and giving it the most natural look possible.

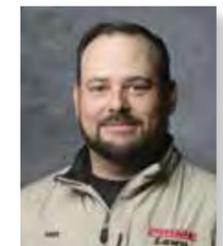
During the final walkthrough, we provided the client with a packet with

mechanics and what to do and when. This way, they're not just new pond owners — they're confident pond owners.

Now the Mackeys have a beautiful pondless waterfall, not only for the family to enjoy, but also to share with their entire tiny house community! ☺

About the Author

Matt Griffin is the owner of Prime Lawn in Houston, Texas. As a Master Certified Aquascape Contractor, he has been designing and building outdoor spaces for 20 years, having won three Aquascape



Awards. His passion is creating water features and complementing them with patios and outdoor living areas to create perfect spaces for his clients to enjoy.



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HELP! HELP!

How to cope with the shortage of workers

by **Tom Grandy,**
Grandy & Associates

are a few strategies and ideas that might just help attract help in the not-too-distant future.

The phone is ringing. People are out there spending money. All of a sudden, it seems like everyone who had ever thought about wanting a pond — both residential and commercial — suddenly wants you to build it, tomorrow! Sales are through the roof. Clearly, the economy is back.

But, just there's one problem. There is a serious shortage of qualified technicians — not just in the pond industry, but also throughout most of the trades out there.

If you were hoping for a silver bullet that would allow you to immediately hire as many workers as you needed, I am afraid that you're going to be a bit disappointed. While there are no instant answers to the worker shortage, there

Reward Performance

Workers tend to be attracted to companies that appreciate and award good performance. Every employee needs a sort of carrot dangling in front of them to increase productivity. Likewise, your workers want you to know they're doing a good job.

The point is pretty simple. Create a system that rewards performance. If they work a bit harder or more efficiently, they earn a bonus. You've likely heard the age-old advice, "Reward performance you want repeated." How does that help recruit new workers? Good employees are currently out there seeking out companies that both appreciate their work and provide rewards for outstanding performance.

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Consider a Wage Hike

Increasing your hourly rate may not be as costly as you think. Several years ago, I was doing some consulting for a services company. Most companies in their area were paying workers \$18 to \$25 per hour for the same service. My client company was paying their workers \$35 per hour!

I asked how he could afford to do that. His reply surprised me a bit at first. He explained that paying the



highest wages in the area not only attracted the best workers, but also came with other benefits as well. His higher-paid employees were more efficient, seldom called in sick, grumbled less, were responsible for a limited number of callbacks, and were more respectful to both management and the customers. Turnover was down, which also which minimized the need for training (and the associated expense). Simply building a workforce he could count on more than made up for the extra dollars he was paying. It definitely makes sense when you think about it.

Keep Your Eyes Open

Let's face it, not everyone excelled in high school. I, for one, did not wake up to the fact that I was going to have to make a living one day until I was in the middle of my junior year. Guess what? There are a lot of quality individuals, myself included, who woke up late.

So, where are they? Many are in the retail or food industry, or perhaps employed at a place like Walmart. I'm sure you have walked into a store and were immediately impressed by a certain employee. Maybe they went the extra mile to be friendly, helpful

and respectful. When my wife and I run into an individual like this, we always turn to each other and say, "I'll bet that person is not here the next time we come!" Clearly, others will notice their work ethic and attitude and consider offering them a job.

Whenever you run into someone like this, hand them a business card and tell them how much you appreciate their attitude. Tell them to give you a call if they ever consider changing careers. I know some contractors who have done this, and they ended up getting calls months and sometimes years later. The principle is simple: Hire for attitude and train for service. Finding new workers in today's market is a job in itself.

Foster a Family Environment

Family is special. When you were growing up, you probably had at least one special friend with whom you wanted to spend as much time as you could. Why? Because you felt loved and accepted.

How many times have you heard someone say the place where they work is like being part of a family? Family works hard together, relaxes together, meets each other's needs and is willing to lay down their lives for each other. Really great work families are hard to find, but when you do find one it's really, really special. It's a group you want to be part of for a very long time.

This begs the question: Are you a good company

to work for? Is there a family environment? Do your employees want to be there? Family environments attract others who want this type of relationship. When you found that first special friend when you were young, I'll bet it wasn't long before there were other kids in your neighborhood who joined the gang, too. A true family environment attracts employees who are also seeking out family.

If you create this family environment, pay above-industry wages and benefits, recognize and reward outstanding performance, and surround yourself with others who have great attitudes, you still may not find new employees as quickly as you need them. But doing these things will certainly attract new employees over time, and I would be willing to bet that most workers of this caliber will also stick around for an extended time. After all, happy employees often talk about their jobs around their friends. They just might want to work for you, too! ☺

Tom Grandy has more than 35 years of experience in industry and small business. He is the founder of Grandy & Associates, a firm that holds seminars, two day workshops and one-on-one consulting for business training. Grandy & Associates also writes articles for numerous trade publications. Tom routinely presents at national and state conventions. For more info, go to www.GrandyAssociates.com or call 800/432-7963.

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Pondering the Perimeter

Tips for waterscape edge design

by **Jamie Beyer**,
Midwest Landscapes

When the subject of edges on water gardens comes up, I cannot help but think of the phrase “sedges have edges.” In other words, if the stems of a marginal water plant have distinct edges, you can be reasonably sure that it is a sedge.

All ponds also have edges, and each type of water garden has a set of circumstances that helps determine the best type of edge for your pond.

Form & Function

Think about the purpose of the pond edge. Protecting and anchoring the waterproof liner are initial considerations. The aesthetics of creating an edge that enhances a beautiful water garden and blends with the overall garden design is the fun part. It is also critical that the edge be stable and last for many years.

There are other important aspects to be aware of when designing an edge. Besides being stable and long lasting (i.e., will not deteriorate over time), it also needs to deter critters, provide entry and exit points for pond maintenance, be itself easily maintained, include wildlife considerations, and, most of all, be beautiful. So, when I mull over all the choices of edge designs, these aspects are considered.

Something I like to promote with any edge plan is varying the design between two or three different types of edges. This reduces the likelihood of a “necklace” look around the perimeter of a water garden. This look, while often used successfully in formal edge designs, is encountered way too often

among misguided attempts to edge informal, natural-looking ponds.

Lay the Groundwork

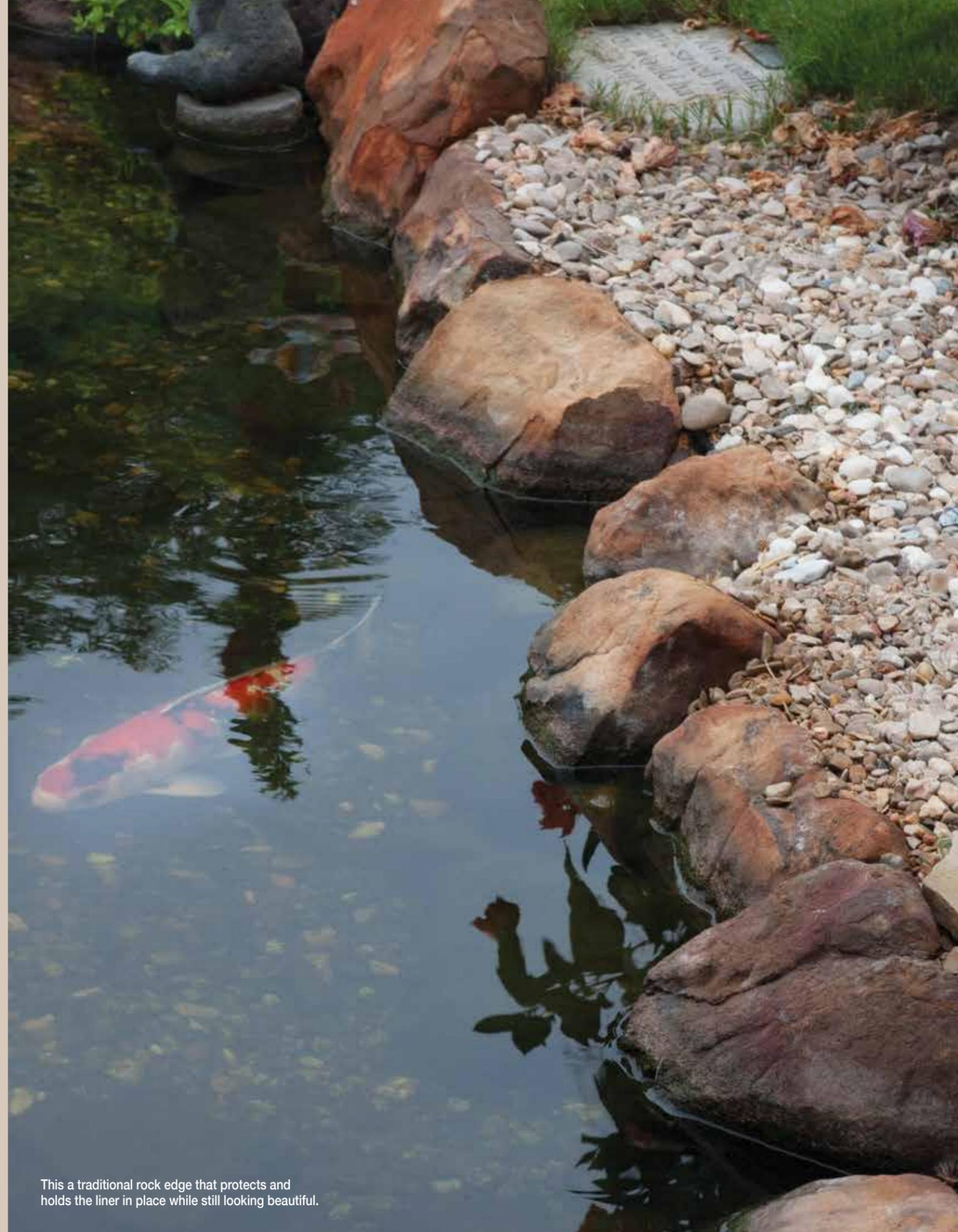
The first step with the installation of any edge is to dig and shape the soil so that it supports the chosen designs. Water levels must be known and appropriate for any edge. Some edges allow for a wide fluctuation in water levels, whereas others look odd if the levels are not spot on.

When planning your pond, determine the edge designs before any soil is removed. Once the soil is disturbed, it is very difficult to reestablish the soil structure so that it will be stable enough to support the edge. In your pond’s design, consider where a concrete underlayment would be useful, like in areas where the soil is unstable, the pond is steep-sided and deep, or where heavy, large rocks may be placed. In areas where concrete is used, be aware of utility lines going in and out of the pond. You may need to create a gap to allow for those lines. Do a good job of planning before doing any digging.

Ledge Considerations

Part of every edge design is figuring out the depth of the ledges you want to create. I am a huge fan of going to a depth of 12 inches to the first ledge. At this depth, you will deter some critters from being effective predators — in particular, raccoons. As I like to say, when a raccoon is doing a back stroke, it cannot catch fish. It is also a good depth for when a person steps into the pond to perform maintenance. If it is deeper than 12 inches, then it is a huge step!

In addition, marginal plants in pots can be set



This a traditional rock edge that protects and holds the liner in place while still looking beautiful.

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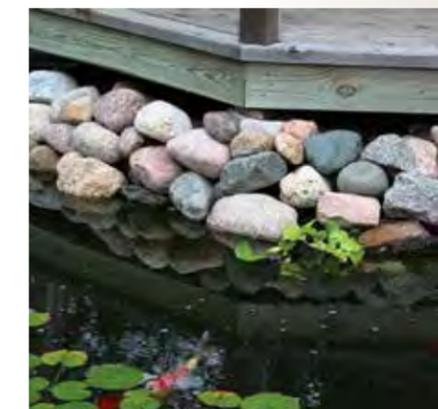
This is a great example of successfully incorporating a variety of stone sizes into the pond's edge.

at this depth without the pot showing. This depth is perfect for most of the designs that I will be discussing. When looking at the design drawings, this depth is apparent in most of them.

EPDM-lined ponds that have a sloped ledge or even an entire sloped bottom can be a huge design mistake. If the entire bottom is sloped and lined with rock, the rock on the slope of the pond leading up to the edge is dependent on the rock in the deeper part of the bottom to hold it in place. If the liner is not covered with a stable layer of rock, it is almost impossible to stand up without slipping or sliding while maintaining the pond. I aim for a slight slope on the bottom to allow sediment to accumulate in a sediment basin or bottom drain, but this slope must be minimal.

I incorporate a collar of raised soil around almost the entire outside perimeter of the pond edge in all my edge designs to prevent any surface water in the surrounding terrain from entering the pond during heavy rain events. In

areas with a flat landscape, there is still a grade where water will pool or run off. This water will contain both surface debris and anything that was applied to the surrounding landscape, like fertiliz-



Stacked stone works quite well when it is protected by a deck to prevent someone from stepping on the rocks. I would personally prefer to see an even wider variety of stone sizes.

ers and chemicals.

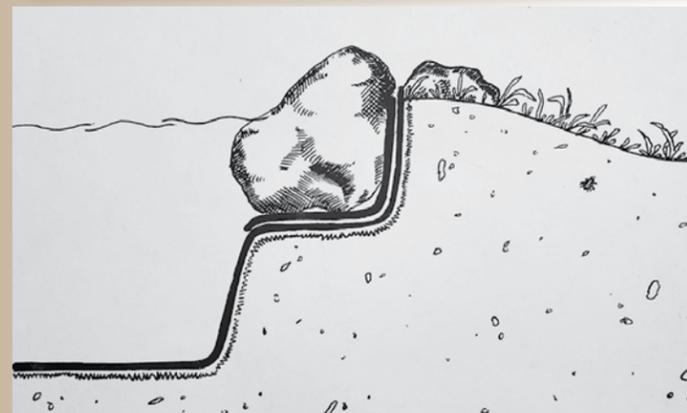
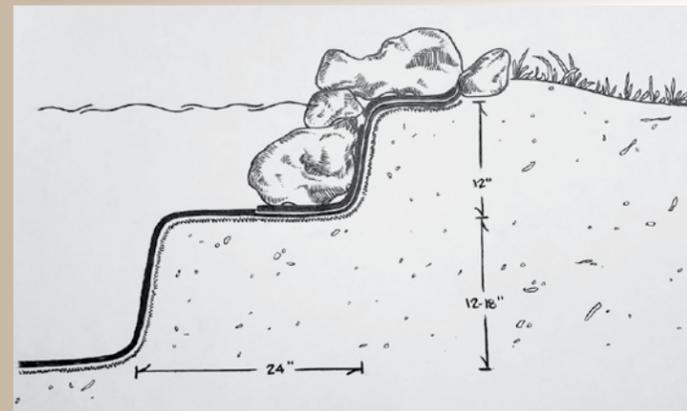
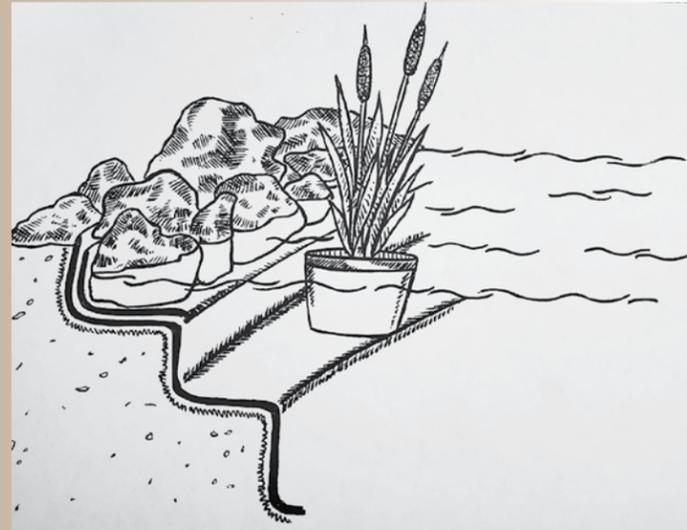
I cannot overstate the importance of at least a 2-inch raised area that is gradually sloped away so that it is

barely noticeable. In areas where water normally flows, like a depression or gully, this area of raised soil will need to be higher. It concerns me when I recall the number of times I have heard people say they need to put their water garden in a low spot. This is a natural impulse, since natural bodies of water occur in the low areas. However, unless you install this collar, these can be the worst places in the landscape for a water feature.

Rock it Out

Let's start with the traditional, widely used informal design of placing rocks down to the first ledge in the water. Rocks are placed down to the shelf and are interlocked with each other for stability.

It takes some practice to become a good "rocker" — i.e., choosing and then placing the stone appropriately. Always vary the size of the stone in this design: anything from huge stones (18 to 24 inches in diameter) to small stones. You



Traditional informal edges using granite rocks are quite popular. The rocks can be stacked down to the first shelf (top) and interlocked with each other. The raised collar of soil outside the edge (middle) prevents water runoff from entering the pond. When possible, implementing a simpler rock edge (bottom) will save on construction costs.

could create an upper, shallower shelf of 6 inches so that it does not take as much interlocking stone. This shelf is for just the stone. You would still want to create the 12-inch shelf below this that would not have any rock placed on it.

A hint for locking the stone in place is to use small stones among the larger ones. You could also use expanding foam or, better yet, mortar mix concrete to lock

You have the option of rocking the entire shelf, but I prefer not to do this. I like having a place to step when entering a pond and placing pots of water plants on this shelf.

them in place. However, do not rely entirely on the foam or concrete to keep them locked. In time, even these can break away, so do a good job of locking the stones together. The stone covers all the liner along the edge so that none shows, even with some fluctuations in water level. Rock is placed on the turf side of the liner as well so that it sandwiches the liner.

You have the option of rocking the entire shelf, but I prefer not to do this. I like having a place to step when entering a pond and placing pots of water plants on this shelf. When the shelf beyond the edge is entirely rocked, these activities become a nightmare. Also, most pond plants, if planted among the rocks, will proliferate throughout the rocks. Then even the plants become a problem. An added design element is to create a place in the edge to be able to easily enter and exit the pond. Find the perfect, mostly flat stone and place it in a stable configuration so that the edge can be safely stepped on. Do this in a couple of places, if possible.

Stack it!

Another informal design that is much simpler requires the availability of more mostly flat stone. The rocks themselves do not have to be perfectly flat, but they do need to be stable when stacked. This does not take as many tons of stone. In a lot of areas, this type of stone is normally limestone, which naturally is relatively flat. If necessary, more flat stones can be stacked so that water levels can fluctuate more without seeing the liner.

A variation from this stacked design is to use human-made concrete decorative blocks of many designs. This is more of a formal design and needs to be installed perfectly flat. In almost every situation when I have used this type of stone, I have laid a concrete base so that these blocks of stone will not move over time. The base is a critical

element of this design.

Another critical consideration is that concrete is very abrasive to the liner. So, the concrete will need to have a protective underlayment installed over it before the liner is laid down. Any freeze-thaw cracking of the concrete that occurs over the winter is normally not an issue, since it is under the flexible liner. The very stable base really will not move very much.

Bog Edges

An edge design that is fun and can be incorporated into any informal design is a bog edge. This is simple to create, but water levels need to be determined exactly. Dig a pocket in the edge approximately 12 inches deep, varying this depth depending on the plants you choose for this wet area. (In most cases, I think 12 inches is good.)

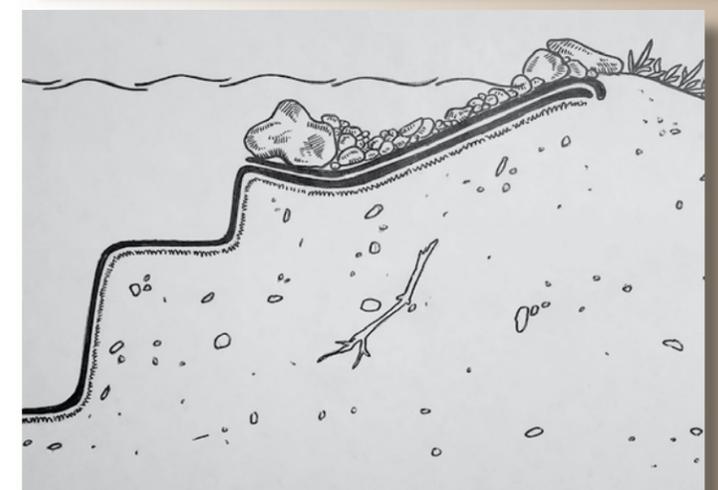
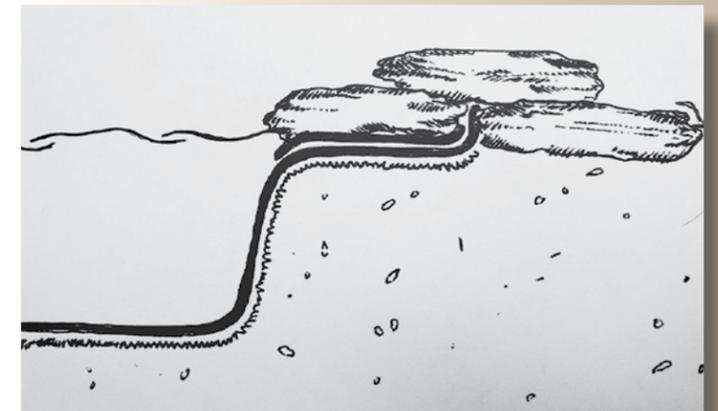
Place a raised area that is stable and made of either concrete or stone with liner overlaying it between the bog and the main water garden. This maintains the integrity of the pocket of soil that is created so that it doesn't wash out. On the turf side of the bog, use stone to anchor the liner and cover it. The soil in the bog will need to be equal parts topsoil, peat moss and sharp sand (also known as play sand). Top the soil with a thin layer of 3/4-inch gravel. I would not use any fertilizers or animal manure in this mix.

The roots of the plants will need a constant supply of water over the top to keep the soil in this bog aerated. Ideally, the best bogs have plants with only a couple of inches of water over their crowns. Some plants can tolerate more water over their crowns than others. Two inches allows water levels to fluctuate without exposing the liner. I would not use this design around the entire edge of the water garden — only on the far side, where you are not normally viewing the pond or maintaining it. This is a good example of using multiple edge designs to create interest.

Critter Considerations

A wildlife-friendly type of edge consisting of a shallow slope can be a good one, but it does have its drawbacks — especially the tendency for string algae to grow prolifically in these areas. Wading birds, raccoons and other fish predators love using a shallow edge to enter and exit a pond. However, so many other great critters are attracted to it, so it's worth considering in certain situations.

This is easy to create and does not take a lot of effort to rock. A ledge or raised area of about 18 inches will need to be created out of either stone or concrete under the liner to keep the gravel from sliding into the pond. This



A stacked flagstone edge (top) requires more accurate leveling of the edge. A bog edge (middle) should be combined with other edge designs so that it is implemented in only a portion of the edge perimeter. A more wildlife-friendly edge (bottom) is inviting for birds and other critters to easily wade in and enjoy.



A limestone edge provides easy access to the entire perimeter of the pond.

creates a small, sloped area only in the edge that goes from zero depth inward about 8 to 12 inches. Again, I would use this edge in combination with several other edge designs. I would not use this type of edge around the entire perimeter.

All ponds have edges — some that

are formal, and a lot that are informal and more natural looking. Your imagination and creativity are the fun part of deciding which edge design fits best in your landscape. Whatever design you choose, just remember that your edge needs to be stable, long lasting, easily maintained and beautiful. ☞

About the Author

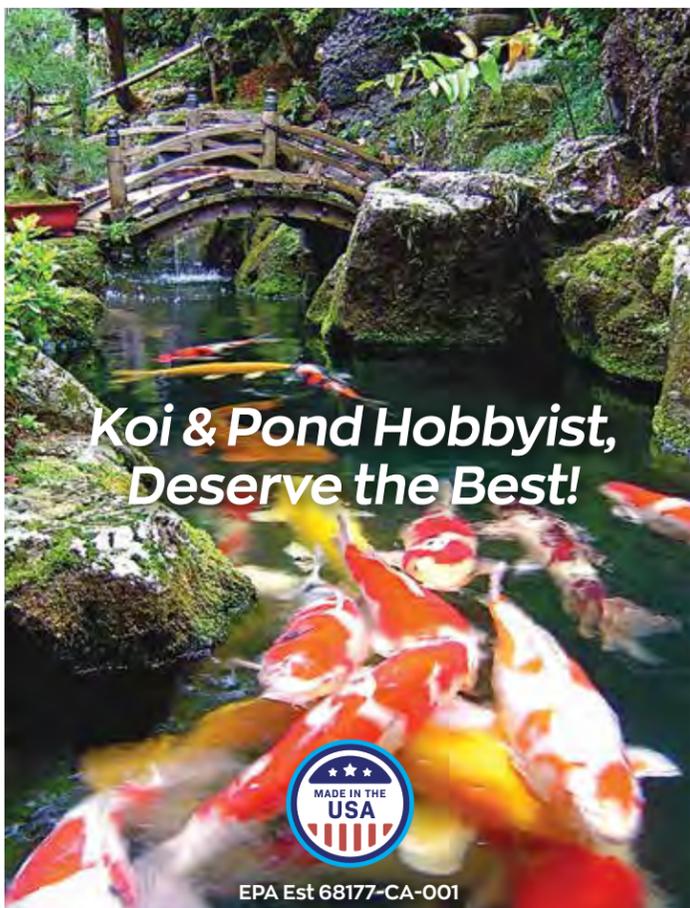


The very popular subject of adding water features to a garden is one that **Jamie Beyer** brings a lot of knowledge and enthusiasm to. Jamie

is a Lifetime Master Gardener and is founder and Past President of the Central Iowa Water Garden Association. He combines this experience with his Master's Degree in Fish and Wildlife Biology to become uniquely qualified to be one of the Midwest's foremost experts on the subject. His

broad background of fisheries, dynamics of water, wildlife ecology, and horticulture gives him impressive credentials.

Jamie frequently speaks and writes on all aspects of water features and water gardening. In addition, he also has a consulting/installation business, called Midwest Waterscapes, which he works as a water garden, fountain and pond consultant/installer to people that want extra help. Jamie has considerable experience installing ponds, diagnosing water garden problems, teaching classes and helping do-it-yourselfers do it right.



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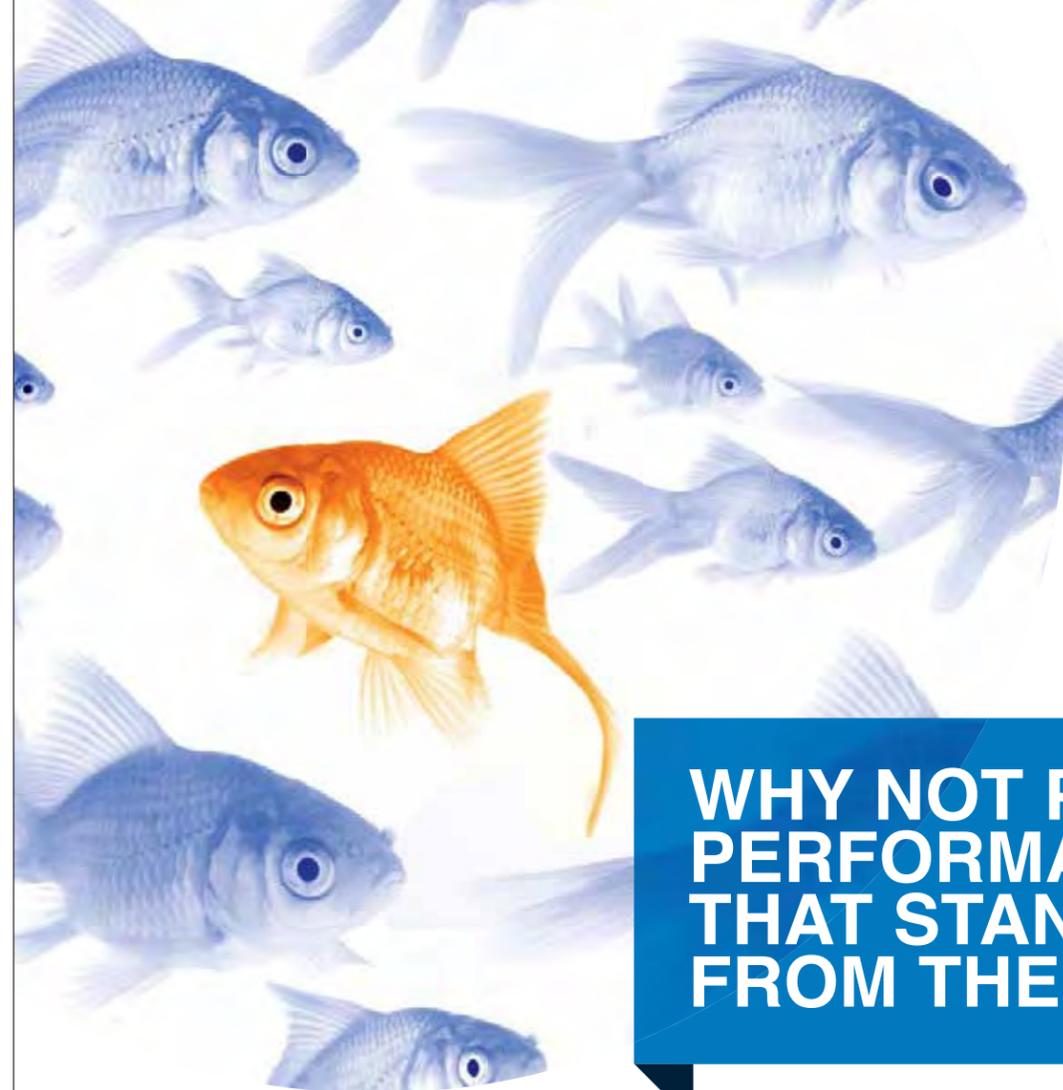


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Romancing the Pond

A pond's conservationist effects on wildlife

by **Mike Gannon,**
Full Service Aquatics

The act of pond keeping is a powerful thing, with an appeal that is broad and deep. Pond keeping can mean many different things to as many different pond keepers. We all have our own reasons for keeping a pond.

As a pond professional, I tend to lean toward the romantic side of ponds when I find myself in the process of bringing a client into the lifestyle of pond keeping. I'll talk to potential clients about the fun of interacting with fish, the relaxing and soothing audio qualities of cascading waterfalls, the dramatic nighttime effects of submersible pond lighting, the appeal of enjoying leisure time with family and friends by the pond, and the draw of simply unwinding with a glass of wine by the pond and watching the swirling colors of fish just below the surface of the water.

It's a seductive process. Very rarely do I take a client down the road of the practical or pragmatic side of pond keeping and leave the romance of a pond to the side. Instead, I like to discuss how a new water garden can become a powerful tool of conservation.

Nature's Water Cooler

We all know that a professionally installed koi pond water garden always becomes the center of attention for gatherings, get-togethers and the occasional romantic escapade. Doesn't every-

one eventually end up by the pond? What some may not know is that there is a whole other world happening right along with us that also has all its escapades ending up by or even in the pond. The outside world has a powerful response to the koi ponds and water gardens that many of our industry's professionals install. The majority of these ponds are installed primarily for the artistry and



Ponds can help remediate the global decline in frog habitats.

aesthetic appeal that a professionally designed and installed pond offers.

But when considered through the prism of conservation, koi pond water gardens are a complex and powerful tool to aid in multiple preservation efforts. Once we look past the stunning visual beauty of the aquatic art we create, we can begin to see the greater effect that these aquatic features have on the area that surrounds them.



Lighting, waterfalls, and some petite sirah are simple introductions to the romantic lifestyle of pond keeping.



Ponds become critical lifelines for wildlife when watering holes dry up or freeze over.



Frogs, dragonflies and other wildlife will utilize a backyard pond as a complete habitat from birth to death.

A newly installed pond where there was once none will have an immediate and vital impact on the natural world surrounding it. A pond becomes nature's "water cooler," where locals gather — local wildlife, that is.

Take a bird's-eye view of any neighborhood that is void of a pond or water feature. Imagine dropping a pond right in the middle of that neighborhood. Once the pond has landed, envision the concentric circles of impact that the pond will have, emanating out from the pond like the ripples created from tossing a pebble across still water. Those ripples are the conservational influence that a pond will have on the area it is introduced into.

The impact of the pond can stretch far beyond the immediate area of the pond itself. Fish, plants, frogs, aquatic insects and numerous other species enjoy the benefits of living right inside the pond. A family of chipmunks living 40 feet away from the pond takes drinks and scavenges around the pond for meals. A gray fox a mile away uses the pond as a private watering hole for its pups. A blue heron 15 miles away might find a meal in the pond, while a monarch butterfly stops for refreshment at the pond on its multi-thousand-mile journey of a lifetime.

Topics of Conservation

The pond is a powerful tool of conservation with far-reaching consequences. A basic definition of conservation is the protection, preservation, management, or restoration of wildlife and natural resources, such as forests and water. Conservation is something of an umbrella term, having broader categories that break down into 2 distinct types: in-situ and ex-situ.

In-situ conservation concerns itself with naturally occurring elements of biodiversity, the species involved, their habitats and greater ecosystems. The ex-situ branch of conservation deals more with elements of biodiversity that

an environment where there was not one previously. In doing so, we are also adding species of animals and plants into an area where they once did not exist. These are not naturally occurring bodies of water, yet they function in many of the same ways as a naturally occurring pond.

Ecosystem Ponds

There are many ways to build ponds. (Some of them even work!) Among the tested and proven approaches to pond design, there are ecosystem ponds. This method of pond construction lends itself particularly well to a pond design catered to conservation efforts. These systems are typically built with profes-

The impact of the pond can also stretch far beyond the immediate area of the pond itself. Fish, plants, frogs, aquatic insects and numerous other species enjoy the benefits of living right inside the pond.

occur out of the context of their natural habitats — think zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, arboretums and similar types of conservation-based efforts.

Ex-situ conservation is where koi pond water gardens come into play. Our constructed backyard koi ponds and water gardens are an ex-situ approach to conservation because we add ponds into

sional-grade equipment such as pond skimmers and biofalls filtration.

However, the hallmark of the ecosystem approach to construction is the use of rock in the interior of the pond and a gravel substrate. With the correct use of rock and gravel, the groundwork is laid for conservation to begin at the microbial level from day

one, with species density and complexity growing daily. A fully mature and healthy ecosystem pond can host many hundreds of species.

Our ponds quickly become a center of activity for not only the introduced species, such as aquatic plants and fish that can live and breed through numerous generations, but also the local wildlife. It will usually be only a matter of minutes before at least one bird shows up to explore the new watering hole, and word tends to spread quite quickly from there.

A typical pond keeper should not be surprised that many species of animals somehow manage to find their pond — birds of all

types and woodland creatures from squirrels and rabbits to deer, fox, bats and bears. Amphibians such as frogs, toads, sala-



Beautiful and romantic waterfalls are also pragmatic and practical ways to create better conditions for local wildlife.

manders and newts often make a pond their home or breeding ground. Frogs are usually among the first

wildlife species to find our ponds. Turtles, snakes and other reptiles will also find and utilize available ponds to their benefit.

Hundreds of species of insects will utilize your pond. We all love the dragonflies, honeybees and butterflies,

but there are also snails, slugs, spiders, ants, crickets, beetles and other uncountable beneficiaries of a pond. Honeybees need to live near a water source and will certainly use any pond local to them. Even nearby landscape plants will work their way toward the ponds that we install, sometimes putting quite a bit of energy into getting a root into the pond system for a constant source of water. It seems that species on every level responds to the presence of a pond.

If you build a pond, many different species will start to show up in a broad spectrum of forms, from microbes to apex predators. Our ponds help in the conservation of numerous species by becom-

ing a vital source of water, food and shelter, representing a complete habitat for some species from the moment the pond is filled. A web of life develops around ponds.

Conservation may be an inadvertent side effect for some pond keepers, but it should be something they are aware of. They should be proud of such a contribution to the local environment. Ponds become a critical lifeline during droughts and deep freezes, when watering holes dry up or freeze over. And let's not forget to mention the domestic pets who also might happen upon a much-needed drink (or even a cool dip) from our backyard ponds.

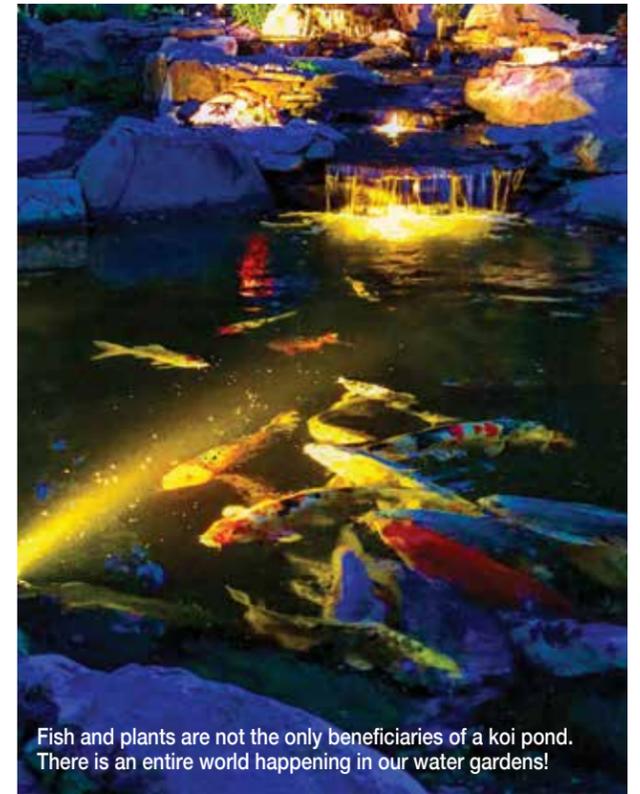
If You Build it ...

If you are considering a

pond as an act of conservation, it can be dialed in to appeal to specific species. Frog ponds, turtle ponds, dragonfly ponds, salamander ponds, bird ponds, trout ponds, wildlife ponds, lily ponds — these represent only a few of the possibilities. Ponds are powerful tools. "If you build it, they will come."

Pond builders are in a great position to act as ambassadors for conservation efforts. Host a build-a-pond day focused on conservation. Hold a seminar by the pond with conservation-based topics. Promoting conservation is promoting your profession as a pond builder.

As pond professionals who are doing our best to bring new people into the world of koi ponds and water gardens,



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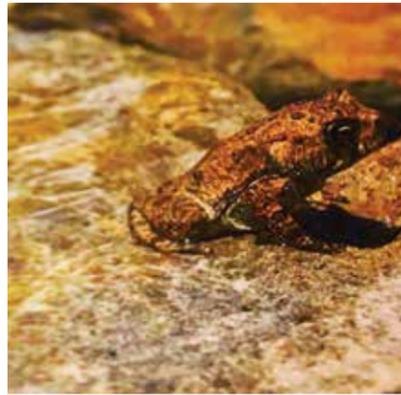
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In an example of true conservation, frogs can emerge from a pond only to return again and complete another cycle of life.

we may still need to stick to the more romantic aspects of pond keeping for now. After all, telling a new client which petite sirah will pair perfectly with their view of the waterfall might go over a little better than pointing out that a local bat colony will depend on their pond for a clean water source, or that the bird-faced tree frog may

want to use the pond as a convenient place to fornicate. Let's stick to the sirah — may I suggest some Koi Pond Cellars?

As we dot the landscapes with our microcosms of conservation, let's take the time to let our clients know what they are embarking on. It's more than landscape jewelry. It's even more than romance. Let's give our customers the unromantic side of pond keeping, too, which has its own appeal. If it comes down to a feel-good version of what pond professionals do, we might find that hitting our clients over the head with the pragmatic facts of how powerful a tool for conservation a pond can be is the way to go. Hey, a colony of eastern brown bats making your yard a watering and feeding hole might be more romantic than we ever could have thought! ☞

About the Author

Mike Gannon is the owner of Full Service Aquatics based in Stewartville, New Jersey. Mike has been a lifelong pond enthusiast and fish-keeper. Mike began Full Service Aquatics after working as a fish importer/dealer and time at the New York Aquarium. FSA has been special-



izing in koi pond, water garden, and water feature design and services since 1995; and more recently Mike opened a destination pond retail location called THAT POND PLACE also based in Stewartville. Mike is host of The Koi Pond Water Garden Podcast found on iTunes, and his Pond Hunter video series can be found at youtube.com/thepondhunter. Mike is also the author of the Love Your Pond blog found at www.fullserviceaquatics.com.



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Go **BIG** or Go Home

How to become a big fish in any sized pond

by **Alan Weene,**
Reflections Water Gardens

Even small water feature contractors can make a big splash by reeling in high-value construction projects. You don't have to be the best water feature artisan, the biggest company, the least expensive bidder or even the most experienced contractor in order to win a lot of the major jobs out there. So, get rid of any presumptions you might have that only the big fish get to build big projects and make the big bucks. It may not happen overnight, but with the right attitude, motivated daily behaviors and thoughtful techniques, you can find yourself reeling in bigger, more valuable jobs and filling your business pipeline with money-making projects that will cement your status as an industry leader.

Be the Big Fish

When you wake up in the morning, how would you rate yourself and your business on a scale of 1 to 10? Do you ever struggle to win bids or turn profits, despite being a hard worker? Maybe you've been given an opportunity to bid a big job but decided to pass it up for several smaller, more manageable jobs in your comfort zone? Or maybe you've simply decided that your business is only capable of handling small, commodity-style water features because you can finish them quickly and move on to the next one — an unassuming, yet reli-

able stream of revenue?

Staying within our comfort zones is easy and familiar, requiring less bravery on our part. But if this is what you think of yourself, then it's all you and your business will ever be — a small fish in a big pond.

"I can't build big water features



Natural-looking water features and vibrant landscapes are within your reach.

because I don't have the skills, experience or equipment to get the job done." "The people in my service area aren't the kind of clients who will spend a lot of money on an outdoor living space." If you've ever said this (or something like it) to yourself, then you're probably right! You'll continue to work your rear end off and struggle to turn profits. You'll keep filling your portfolio with images of modest projects, which,



Do you work with large boulders (right) to create natural waterscapes? Be transparent about your process and show your customers how you do it! Be intentional with your messaging. Photos and videos of your crew working well as a team (above) can be an effective way to tell your story.



after a while, will all start to look the same to you and your prospective clients. You'll create a "just-another-average-Joe-pond-builder" image for your company with little differentiation from your competition.

So, maybe some changes in attitude are exactly what you need to take your identity (and your business) to the next level.

Attitude Adjustment

Ask yourself again, how would you rate yourself and your current business efforts on a scale of 1 to 10? Dear friends, I've got news for you. You are a 10! You may not realize it right now. You may have other things going on in your personal or professional life that make you feel like a 6 or a 7 on most days. Hey, maybe some days you feel like a 2 — but if that's all you think of yourself on a consistent basis, then you are living a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Instead, I encourage you to wake up each day and say to yourself, "I'm a 10, my business is a 10, and I am capable of winning and delivering 10-caliber projects." If this sounds childish or unrealistic to you, then you're thinking like a small fish. Whether you are a novice pond builder who is just starting out on your own, or you are a seasoned veteran with hundreds of water features under your belt, stepping into the realm of high-value, custom construction projects requires a shift in attitude — a "yes-I-can" modus operandi. We're not talking about hoping and dreaming of becoming a 10 only if we accomplish X, Y, and Z first. We're talking about truly believing that right here, right now in this moment, we identify ourselves as a 10. We are the best, and our daily behaviors are the kind of behaviors that other 10s do.

Your attitude is what drives all your behaviors. Positive attracts positive, and negative attracts negative, so don't let your preconceptions, prior actions or personal politics sabotage your goals. Once you start thinking of yourself as a 10 and identifying as a big fish, then you are one step closer to your next big-money water feature construction project.

What makes you different? Drone imagery (top and middle) can be a great way to capture intangibles like teamwork and the cleanliness of your job site. Make it clear that you're selling more than just water features (bottom). You're selling a lifestyle!

Reach for the Stars

Remember when our parents and mentors told us to reach for the stars? They were trying to inspire us to be the best versions of ourselves in order to achieve greatness. Well, guess what? Now that you are identifying as a 10, the stars are already within your reach! You just need to know where to look for them — and what to do when you find them.

Inevitably, there will be opportunities to work on large-scale water features. However, if you're not putting in the time to make yourself visible, these opportunities will come and go without you knowing they ever existed, until you see them on your competitor's website or social media page. You might say to yourself, "Hey, why wasn't I asked to bid on that big job? We do much nicer-looking work than those guys, so what am I missing that they've got?"

I assure you that it's not the depth of their portfolio that landed them the job.



They won because they have the right outlook and perception of themselves, their company, their products and their marketplace. They have a daily plan and execute it. This combination of attitude and behavior makes their company highly visible and attractive to others.

Effective behaviors that can help position your company for success

include things like networking with and aligning yourself with other professionals, landscapers, designers, architects, builders and organizations. Engage with them on social media. Tag them in your posts and share their stories to your own page. Participate in forums and make your presence known, because you never know when a referral may be

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coming your way.

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time you go into a client meeting. Write short but informative blog articles and post them regularly on your website, while always linking to them from your social media pages. All these behaviors

will help to broaden your reach and put you on a stage for others to see.

Focus on Process

Companies that are successful in winning jobs big and small are the ones that regularly demonstrate their expertise, proficiency and professionalism and put it on display. After all, it's not what you say about your company, but how you say it.

For example, in order to convey to prospective clients that you are capable of taking on large-scale projects, you may be tempted to show them photos of huge boulders and massive machines with a caption that says, "We lift big rocks!" However, the process is just as important as the end result, if not more important. When you're on a job site, try shooting some video of your crew working together as a team, demonstrating proper techniques like lifting, strapping and hoisting big rocks safely. Talk about how

safety and proficiency are important elements of your company's construction process and why that matters.

Similarly, you may be trying to deliver a "we-are-professionals" message by showing beautiful images of completed jobs you are very proud of. Take some photos of the job site on a Friday afternoon before you leave for the weekend. Is your plywood stacked? Are your materials tarped or covered? Have you loaded up your truck with construction waste and debris, ready to be hauled off site? Is the job site left neat, orderly and in the same condition that you would expect a contractor to leave your own home? Don't just say that you are committed to keeping your client's property neat and orderly. Show it!

Customers buy for their reasons and their reasons alone. They may be frustrated with the experience of working with a previous contractor, and so your company's efficiency, work ethic, timeliness, punctuality and communication may be

more important to the customer than the price or quality of the product itself. What might seem valuable to you — a nicely landscaped pond, a massive waterfall or a perfectly plumbed valve manifold — may not be perceived as valuable to every customer. In the eyes of a customer, all contractors are the same until they prove themselves to be different.

Think about what makes your company different and your process unique. How do these things address what your customers value most? Show it off to others through video and informative articles. Being transparent about your process and intentional with your messaging requires an investment of time and effort, but doing so also builds trust and confidence in your brand and paints a picture of your company that says, "We are the best, not just because of where we can go, but because of how we get there."

Be intentional. Be transparent. Be a 10. 

About the Author

Alan Weene is the operations manager at Reflections Water Gardens



in West Dundee, Illinois, specializing in design, consulting and construction services for all kinds of water features, sustainable landscapes and elegant

natural sanctuaries. He spent his childhood exploring the lakes and mountains of New England. An avid outdoorsman, Alan developed a passion for recreating natural environments through his master's degree studies in sustainable design at the Boston Architectural College, where he wrote his thesis on Natural Systems and Ecological Literacy. Weene moved to Illinois in 2020 to work alongside his friend, colleague and mentor Larry Carnes, president of Reflections Water Gardens.

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No matter the size, koi need to be visually inspected for parasites, loss of scales and slime coat.

| Language of **Koi** |

New Koi on the Block

Why new fish need to be quarantined

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

Are your fish clean? Do they have parasites, or have they been mixed with a contaminated batch of fish that have shown problems? There is a saying among fish dealers: "All fish dealers are liars except you and I, and I'm not so sure about you!"

New Arrivals

You purchased your koi, so now what? Do

you put them straight in with your other fish, or do you separate them and check for problems?

Over the years, we have received tens of thousands of fish. And, over the years, we have lost tens of thousands of fish due to the simple fact that shipping stresses the fish. Long flights are hard on fish. Many times, the shipper will not purge the fish before sending them to us, so ammonia builds up in the bag and weakens the fish's immune system. Parasites can proliferate rapidly. Then, an opportunistic bacteria or virus will set in, causing sores, making them unsalable and sometimes even killing the fish.



Visual inspection of all fish (left) can result in finding easy-to-see parasites such as anchor worm (middle). Further inspection with a microscope can find pesky flukes (right), which in sufficient numbers will quickly kill fish.

The best way to not lose fish is to quarantine. Your better fish suppliers will heed this warning and not send out diseased fish. (You know which ones they are by reputation.) The tank needs a separate filter system with adequate circulation, filtration, oxygen supply and a cover. Fish will jump, and generally it's the pretty ones that jump out first...

Quarantine Protocol

The day the fish arrive, I have a protocol for quarantining that lasts six weeks. Keeping the fish in good shape starts when the bag is opened. I set up a separate tank for new fish with a temperature within 10 degrees of the bag temperature. The water should be treated with salt, about 4 to 6 parts per

thousand (ppt). If the temperature in the bag is not close to that of the tank, I acclimate the fish by floating the bag in our water until the water in the bag is within 10 degrees of our quarantining tank. These bags will generally have a high ammonia smell. Never mix this water with your quarantine tank water; remove the fish and place them in the new water. If the ammonia level is high,

I also treat the tank with nitrofurazone for six days to heal the gills.

Visually inspect the fish for problems. I specifically look for bruising, missing scales and sores. At this point, there are two easily viewed external parasites — fish lice and anchor worm. These need to be treated with Dylox or Dimilin, since they have a chitin shell that is hard for most other chemicals to permeate. I treat for these parasites three times — once a week for three weeks to account for the eggs they can lay while in quarantine.

You need access to a microscope; you can't diagnose what you can't see. Using a cover slip and slide for a scope, I get three samples from 10% of fish received. I gently get a gill scrape, a mid-line scrape and top fin (or dorsal fin) scrape. If you see anything moving other than fish slime, like gyrodactylus or dactylogyrus, a treatment of formalin with malachite green or praziquan-

tel are used. These are commonly called gill flukes. Notice the fish hooks at the bottom of the body. These will typically cause a tear in the fish's gill or body where bacteria will opportunistically

Visually inspect the fish for problems. I specifically look for bruising, missing scales and sores.

enter and cause further fish distress. I treat for five consecutive days, with a water change after the third dose.

Other Options

Bacterial treatments are the third-tier protocol. Potassium permanganate is used in a straight five-day treatment to eradicate some gill parasites, fungal infections and bacteria. I mix a 2-ppm dose and add it to the water. The water should turn a clear pink color. Once



The red circles indicate a common fish lice that, if not treated quickly, will reproduce and kill every fish they attack.

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You can't treat effectively what you can't see. Microscopes can be purchased for just about any price, from inexpensive to big bucks. Learning to use one takes only a few moments. Seeing what's on the surface of the fish allows the treatment of flukes and other parasites.

the color has changed to a brownish color, the effectiveness is generally over. Clearing of the water is easily done with a follow up of hydrogen peroxide. Potassium will kill all the bacteria in a filter, so when treating, it is wise to set the filter on recirculate until the treatment is finished. We recommend that the filter be aerated during treatment, or the beneficial bacteria will die off if not sufficiently aerated. Potassium will also clear or polish the water and kill algae. Be aware that oxygen levels can drop in the water when algae are no longer producing oxygen.

The fourth-tier protocol is for aeromonas bacteria. Upon inspection of the body, if large, red sores are found, these are possible beginnings of aeromonas bacteria. These can cause small or large holes in the sides of fish, which can and will be fatal if not treated. Oxalinic acid is used for three days and is frequently successful in stopping the bacteria.

The last-tier protocol is to wait. There are fish viruses that cannot be treated and can manifest after a short period of time. Many better fish vendors will send off samples to veterinary colleges to get results stating they do not have the dreaded KHV, or koi

herpes virus. This virus manifests itself when the water is under 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Presently there is no cure for KHV. There are several cases of complete populations of fish being killed after getting exposed to KHV.

Best Practices

I try to keep the stressors as low as possible all year long. Water monitoring is a constant task that reaps great rewards in making my fish happy and healthy. If a customer calls and asks why their fish are not eating — a first hint that something is wrong — I ask for the pH and ammonia levels. Generally, I hear crickets on the other end of the line. When the test is eventually run, the pH is low, or the ammonia is high. These are easily regulated. A simple liquid reagent test kit gives more accurate results than test strips. Correct the problem!

After the quarantine period is over and the new fish are introduced to your pond, the work does not stop there. A quote from Dr. Erik Johnson still rings true today: "You don't treat the fish; you treat the water. The fish will take care of themselves." 

TIPS FOR KEEPING HEALTHY WATER:

- Perform water changes at 10% per week or a simple flow through with a constant drip.
- Provide adequate filtration for the water.
- Measure the pH and keep it between 7.0 and 8.3.
- Keep the ammonia, nitrite and nitrate levels as close to zero as possible.
- Salt the water. If plants are in the water, keep the salt level between 2.0 and 2.5 ppt. If no plants are in the water, amounts can go up to 6.0 ppt.
- Use an ultraviolet light to kill any parasites or motile bacteria floating in the water column.
- Use an air pump in addition to a waterfall to keep the oxygen level above 8.0 ppm.
- Add sodium bicarbonate and calcium chloride to raise the KH and GH levels above 100 ppm.

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.

NOT Your Grandma's Pool

Recreation ponds reinvent the modern
backyard landscape

by Tom Dieck and Dylan Arlotta,
TRD Designs and Aquascapes East

With every new advancement in the pond world, it's hard to believe that merely 50 years ago the best chance most homeowners had at realizing their water-garden dreams was finding an adventurous mason willing to attempt the feat of creating a small concrete pool in their front yard, then crossing their fingers and hoping for the best.

Although concrete is still used in pond construction, the costs and labor-intensive process have made it less desirable for many homeowners and installers. Development of new materials such as flexible EPDM liner has opened the door for water feature artists across the country to explore new solutions for bringing nature closer to home. Times change, and our perceptions of what was possible often fall by the wayside.

Concrete holes in the ground have given way to rubber-lined ponds that are artistically hidden with rock boulders and river gravel. With the incorporation of aquatic plantings, fish and underwater lighting achieving the

natural oasis our grandparents couldn't even dream of is now easier than ever. Witnessing the results of these advancements leads to the inevitable question — what's next? How can we as water feature artists or nature-loving homeowners bring ourselves closer to the natural elements that we all value? For those of us adventurous enough to be ahead of the curve, the answer might just be a recreation pond.

What's a Recreation Pond?

A recreation pond is best defined as a constructed ecosystem that caters to all forms of aquatic and semi-aquatic life, with a focus on the creatures we hold most dear — humans!

Think of a recreation pond as a hybrid between a swimming pool and an ecosystem-based water garden. Swimming pools need no explanation, as they have become more or less ubiquitous in our modern lives. Ecosystem-based ponds, on the other hand, are human-made water gardens that achieve clean, crystal-clear waters by utilizing the natural processes of nature. Combining the classic swimming pool with the ecosystem pond can result in a stunning backyard oasis that holds

When we arrived on the scene (top left), the 20-by-40, ordinary gunite pool was used for only four to five months a year. After removing and discarding the existing pool, we started constructing the recreation pond. From above (top right), you can clearly see to the bottom of the 8-foot-deep swimming pond. We terraced the hillside with native boulders found on site, allowing us to construct a waterfall that appears to come out of the hillside naturally. Our goal for this landscape development was to create a visually pleasing, organic-looking, interactive space that blends in with the woodland landscape (bottom right).



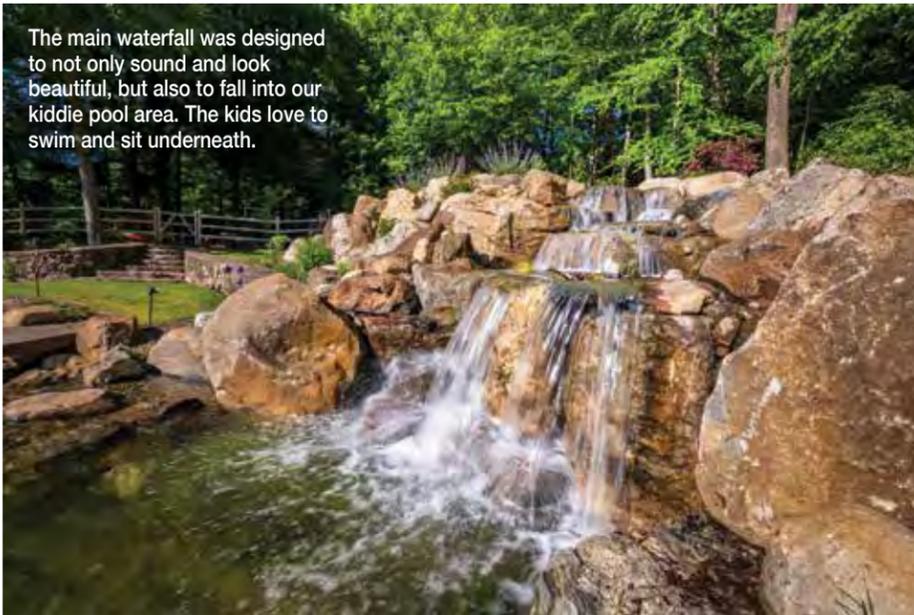
much more allure than all but the most extravagant poolscapes.

No set of written words can explain how refreshing it feels on a midsummer's day to trade in the stress of work and a hot, sweaty T-shirt for the sanctity of a swimsuit and a plunge into the backyard swimming pool. Maybe it's just a quick dip to cool off or a float on a raft with a cocktail in hand. Either way, while you are in that pool, you're probably thinking, "It doesn't get much better than this!"

If it were still your grandparents' time, you'd be right — but times have changed! Recreation ponds have the potential to put a whole new spin on this age-old summer ritual. Although your grandparents may have had the luxury of a private backyard swimming pool, many others were no strangers to cooling off in the local stream or pond as a way to beat the summer heat and spend some quality time with the family. A recreation pond is a way to recapture this connection to nature without having to leave the solace of your own backyard.

Recreation pond construction can take many forms, but most features follow a few simple rules and processes. Similar to an ecosystem pond, a hole is excavated by digging into the earth to create shelves of varying depths until the desired depth is achieved in the central area of the pond — usually 6 to 10 feet.

After applying a thin layer of sand to the shelves and geotextile underliner to all the exposed surfaces, a single piece of EPDM rubber liner is installed into the entire excavated area. Placing large boulders along all the vertical transitions



The main waterfall was designed to not only sound and look beautiful, but also to fall into our kiddie pool area. The kids love to swim and sit underneath.

and applying gravel to all the horizontal shelves that were created during excavation will completely hide the rubber liner and leave a very natural appearance.

Keys to Circulation

The secret to ecosystem success is literally in the gravel. The gravel applied

to these shelves provides a ton of surface area for natural bacteria to colonize. Once established, these invisible powerhouses will be busy filtering the pond on a microscopic level.

To help efficiently filter the water

without the use of unsightly pool-style filtration, some tricks of the trade may be incorporated, including wetland filtration. Wetland filters are essentially separate bodies of water that appear shallow and lushly planted with a variety of aquatic plants. Water is slowly pumped 3 to 5 feet to the bottom of these pools and up through layers of gravel before

passing through a layer of plant roots and returning to the main pond. By circulating the water of the recreation pond through a constructed wetland, any floating sediment is captured and converted into beautiful foliage.

Keep in mind that when a body of water is deeper than 3 or 4 feet, it becomes necessary to mix the water from the lower depths with that of the shallower depths to achieve a water quality that is uniform. By digging a large trench across the bottom of the deepest area of the pond during excavation, we provide a means to make this mixing easy. By installing a layer of Aquablox, or durable plastic blocks meant to hold tremendous weight loads while maintaining an open space, in the very bottom of the pond, we create a space for pumped water. These blocks are then covered with a mosaic of blue-stone pieces with 4-to-6-inch gaps between the stones. Placing a thin layer of 2-to-3-inch gravel in these gaps will cover the Aquablox while still allowing the water to escape through the gaps. This results in convection-style circulation that mixes the water within the pond and never allows sediment to settle in the deep section.

Also consider setting up regeneration zones, or pockets of shallow aquatic plantings set alongside the main swimming area. Made popular



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by European-style swimming ponds, these plantings not only help to soften and naturalize the pond edge but also provide added natural filtration.

Bells & Whistles

Recreating nature and utilizing natural biological processes to achieve a visually attractive, low maintenance work of art is a key feature of any recreation pond.

Recreation ponds are a stunning sight in every season, 365 days a year. They provide a connection with nature and a focal point for any backyard oasis.

Understanding how to cater these installations to the wild side within us is the key to creating an interactive feature that blows swimming pools out of the water! Here are a few of the bells and whistles our team likes to incorporate into our designs.

Large, flat, natural boulders that overhang the water's surface can provide a great spot to jump the rocks, go all in and show off that cannonball you've been perfecting.

Ever hear of a swim tunnel? They're not just for kids anymore. The feeling of swimming through a tunnel underwater is the ultimate in backyard adventure. Using sturdy, large-diameter culvert pipe, we create a tunnel that is completely disguised by rock work. Swim into the hidden entrance and surface again in a completely different part of the pond.

Or, if you prefer wading over splashing, add a beach area. These shallow transitions are a great place for kids to play, bringing the sandy beach experience right into the backyard.

Consider adding underwater furniture — what a concept! Sun decks, love seats and floating tables



Looking down from the top of the main waterfall gives you a great perspective of the scale of this project.

are just a few of the cool pieces that can be incorporated into the design to cater to human use without detracting from the natural appearance of the feature. After all, we are social creatures. When we hang out in the pool, it's no different. Creating mini sub-surface patio areas on the shelves of the recreation pond that use the same materials as those surrounding the feature can provide natural spots for people to gather while in the water.

Finally, install underwater lighting to experience snorkeling in your recreation pond. Rediscover all the subsurface nooks and crannies as beams of light interact with water lily plantings and the glimmering koi that emerge from the darkness and cross through these beams of subtle light.

A Pool for All Seasons

Swimming pools are sanctuary spaces, without a doubt; however, they do need regular maintenance to keep them looking clean and regular treatments of chemical additives to keep them clear.

However, the biggest downside to most poolscaped backyards is their

limited use. Swimming pools in most parts of the country can only be used for a few months out of the year. Outside this brief summer window, the pool just sits there. Maybe it's covered, or maybe it's just gathering leaves and debris until next season. Most poolscapes act as an eyesore or a not-so-subtle reminder of work to come for most of the year.

Recreation ponds are a stunning sight in every season, 365 days a year. They provide a connection with nature and a focal point for any backyard oasis. Swimming pools only live up to their potential while you are swimming in them, while recreation ponds can be enjoyed from outside the water year-round.

As staycations become more popular and our desire to be connected with nature increases, recreation ponds are providing many of us with the solutions we have been searching for. With all the benefits that a recreation pond can add to your lifestyle, and knowing that the installation costs are similar to those of constructing a conventional swimming pool, one can only wonder what the backyard landscape in America may look like in the next 50 years! ☘

About the Authors

Dylan Arlotta of Aquascapes East has been installing water features for 25 years in the Hudson Valley of New York. He loves to embrace the randomness of nature and does his best to incorporate the subtle nuances he has observed while out hiking the Catskills and surrounding areas. Realizing every achievement opens the door to a new challenge and reflecting on what each separate water feature teaches him is what keeps him coming back for more.



Tom Dieck, owner of TRD Designs and Aquascapes East, has won two Water Artisan of the Year awards (Best Pondless 2018, Ponds Revisited 2019). He has more than 34 years of experience in the green industry. His team includes Master Certified Aquascape Contractors and are two-time winners of Unilock's Awards of Excellence. He has also been the lead designer on two episodes of ABC Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.



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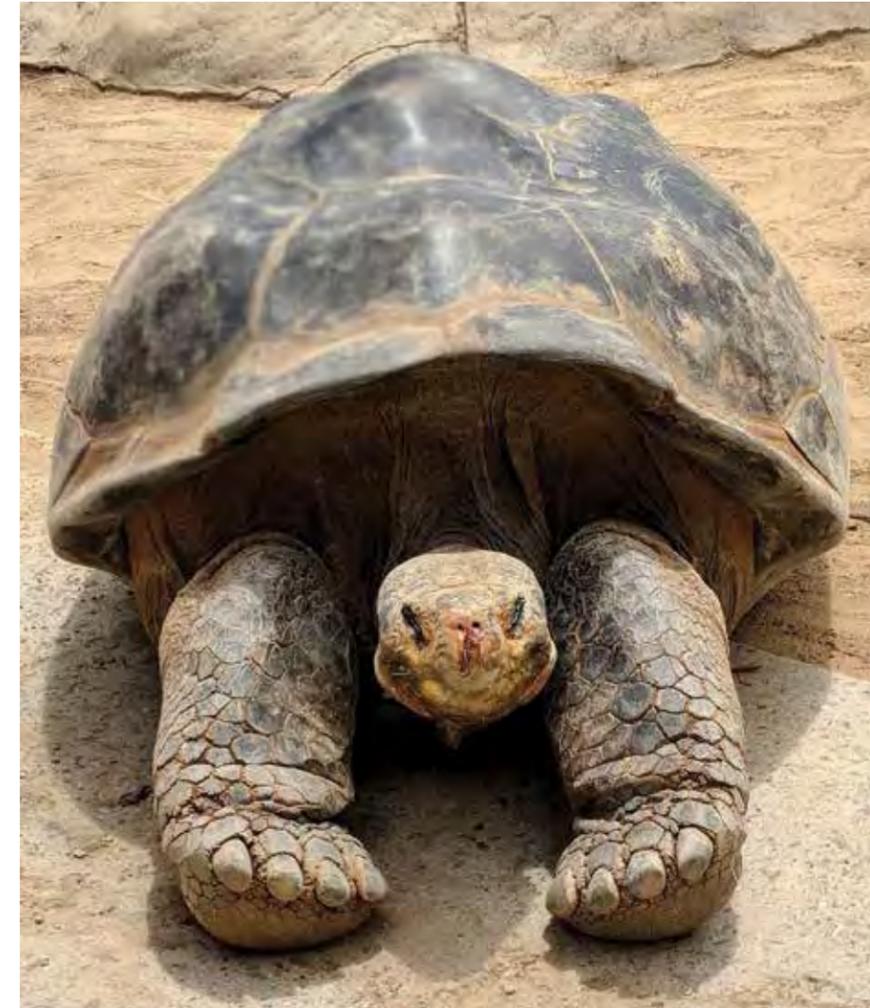
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Tubular tortoise habitat gets aquatic upgrade

by **Kent Wallace**,
Living Water Solutions

SERIES:
Best Pond Practices

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

I've had calls in the past about turtles and turtle ponds, and I always try my best to advise people on any related construction needs.

But I have to say that desert tortoises are a little different. A rule of thumb is that ponds built near a tortoise habitat should be raised or securely fenced off

with a separate water supply for the tortoises. The Desert Tortoise Society has specific rules for water features dedicated to these animals, because they do like water and can drown easily. Several years ago, I pulled my father's desert tortoise off the bottom of his pond twice. He recovered each time over a day or so, but he had a tendency to try to drink near the pond edge and then end up sliding in with no way out.

Big Kahunas

Last year, a client invited me to look at a local



Tubular valves are spaced and laid out before installation.

tortoise habitat. He needed help finding a solution for the poor water quality and high maintenance of the tortoise water feature. When I arrived, I was surprised to find five African Sulcata tortoises averaging what looked to be about 300 pounds each. They had a large grass area and a covered habitat along with a water feature that they routinely cruised through. The feature was a large rectangle about 15 by 20 feet. It was a concrete structure that tapered from zero along the front edge to about 5 inches deep near the back. It was surrounded on three sides by a short concrete wall with a stacked 4-by-4-foot wooden wall on top of that. Maintenance consisted of constantly draining and filling it with a submersible pump and scooping out the large, avocado-sized poop balls that were dissolving in the water.

This was going to be a challenge because breaching the concrete for drains and circulation was not much of an option. I did not need much in the form of biofiltration — mostly just prefiltration and aeration. The entire hardscape

around the backside was concrete, which eliminated any gravity-flow prefiltration, so I decided to build a Static Suction Prefilter (SSP) and provide direct suction before the pump. The hard part was getting the water out of the pond with

This was going to be a challenge because breaching the concrete for drains and circulation was not much of an option. I did not need much in the form of biofiltration — mostly just prefiltration and aeration.

only about 5 inches of depth to work with along the back edge. I also needed to pull water from more than one point along the back edge.

SSP Construction

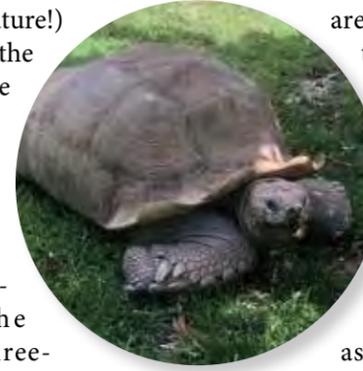
What I created was a 3-inch pipe assembly with adjustable slide valves opening just above the floor. I used a

combination of 3-inch pipe, 3-inch coupler material and pieces of 4-inch pipe. Normally a 3-inch coupler slides just inside a piece of 4-inch pipe, so I machined the 4-incher a little larger on the inside and cut sections to act as guides. I cut an offset “L” shape in the ends of 3-inch couplers to make it a longer section when bonded together. I also molded a handle connector to fit the slide section. They form three rotating valves that can be adjusted to regulate the flow, with one at each end and one in the center. The entire suction assembly lays against the back wall just below water level with a cap on one end and a sweep 90 coming out and over the concrete edge on the other.

I needed to bore angled holes through the lower edge of the wooden wall, which turned out to be quite an effort. Whatever the wood they used to build the wall was very sturdy, but eventually the hole went through. Once outside the wall, I immediately connected the 3-inch to a 4-inch inline check valve to minimize any restric-

tion (mostly due to those avocado-sized droppings). After the check valve, the pipe is reduced back down to 3-inch, where it is connected to a 3-by-3-by-3, three-way Pentair valve as it enters the prefilter.

My SSP is normally 2 ½-inch on the inlet and drain, but for this project, I modified the inlet to 3-inch. (I just may make them all this way in the future!) I also made the discharge outlet 3-inch to prevent any discharge clogging when servicing. The 3-inch, three-way valve on the inlet



This water passes through spray heads blasting the media from the top down for the backwashing cycle. In normal operation, the water travels through the three-way directly to a 4-inch diameter, 86-watt Flow Free UV light. From the far end of the UV light assembly, the water goes up over the concrete edge and down into the closest corner of the shallow area of the pond through a 1 ½-inch pipe. Another outlet goes out the end of the UV light assembly to a wye, which serves as a cleanout, and another 1 ½-inch

water pipe that runs under the ground to the far corner of the shallow area. Each of the ends of the returns at the shallow end has a spray head assembly that fans the water out in a 90-degree pie shape into each corner of the pond, much like a 90-degree sprinkler head sprays the corner of a section of grass. This head is upside down against the concrete and fans out immediately. The fan of water is my

The pump pulls water from the prefilter, sending it to a 2-inch, three-way valve that allows for the diversion of pond water entering the tank from the top.



With the 4-inch check valve in position (top), the W. Lim pump and static suction prefilter are put in place (second photo). Their dedicated drinking trough (third photo) is fully assembled, setting the tortoises off on the march (bottom)!



This friend on the half shell is enjoying some breakfast (left). The finished pump and prefilter enclosure are complete (right).



source for oxygen, much like a waterfall is for a garden pond. The existing auto-fill was modified with a tee assembly that holds both the float and a 3/4-inch valve to allow for faster filling when necessary.

Water Works

The system works well, with my only issue being depth — or lack of it, allowing some air to get sucked in and occasionally starving the pump. With a shallow system like this one, maintaining the water level as high as possible is critical. The auto-fill timer has been adjusted multiple times to add enough water to keep up with the abnormal evaporation in a shallow system like this.

The filter area was enclosed with a lot of ventilation in the roof because of our intense Las Vegas heat. The system has taken some tweaking but has eliminated the weekly draining. The large tortoise turds

are scooped out on occasion and, if they get pulled in, can travel easily into the prefilter and be flushed out when necessary.

Ninja Tortoises

Toward the end of the project, the client decided he wanted a drinking trough along the back wall of the building next to the pond to give the tortoises another option for drinking water. The tortoises regularly cruise through the feature but do not appear to drink out of it. Their other options are water jugs standing in several places in the yard, but these regularly get plowed over when the boys start to wrestle, so this gives them another source. The trough is a split section of 6-inch pipe with inlets and outlets on the ends. The water is connected to the system through the cleanout protruding from the end of the UV light. Water is diverted to the far end of the trough and spills back in near the corner.



This dude is headed for a dip.

It was a fun and interesting project with a set of challenges not normally found in the pond world. It was also a learning experience. For instance, I learned that you don't really know what a real head-butt is until you get one from a 300-pound tortoise wanting to know where his water went! 



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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Trade News



That Pond Place Store Opens in New Jersey Highlands

"Amazon is just a passing fad. Brick and mortar is going to make a roaring comeback," said no retail expert ever. "A worldwide pandemic is closing storefronts everywhere," said many retail experts. "You're crazy to do retail." "There goes your life." "Retail is dead." The list goes on. With all that said, the time seemed about right to add a new retail venture to the world of koi ponds, water gardens and water features. Better yet, it's being done in brick and mortar!

New to the world of ponds and located in the beautiful New Jersey highlands region dotted with picturesque farms, vineyards, rolling hills and scenic byways, you will find That Pond Place brick and mortar retail in all its newfound glory. We are the destination location for koi pond keepers, water gardeners, backyard staycationers and those who love all things aquatic. We are conveniently located next to several major New Jersey highways, near New York City and 30 minutes from the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania. Our address is 2656 Route 57, Stewartsville, New Jersey 08886.

Come and enjoy a wide selection of amazing cultivar waterlilies, lotus flowers, tropicals and other stunning aquatic plants. Browse handselected and high-quality plants to enjoy and add to your garden. Visit our friendly and colorful koi fish, goldfish and other pondy critters. All of the livestock is professionally sourced from the highest-quality breeders and importers. Come and pick some great fish to bring home.

We stock all the pond supplies that pond keepers need, from fish food and aquatic plant care to pond equipment, pumps, filters, lighting and decor like driftwood, wind chimes, sun catchers, gifts, yard art and unusual items. We feature a design center for koi ponds, water gardens and water features of all types and sizes. Enjoy the displays of waterfalls, overflowing urns, bubblers, koi ponds and water gardens all on site. Consult about your pond or water feature project right on site with our expert staff of pond professionals who will be happy to share more than 26 years of experience in the design, installation and care of everything pond related.

Visit our website at www.thatpondplace.com and get on the mailing list to keep up with new products, fish and plants, educational seminars, customer appreciation events and parties and music by the pond. We are also on Facebook and Instagram.

We are open to the public. Come and enjoy a day in the scenic highlands of New Jersey at the newest destination for colorful koi, aquatic plants, and amazing water features. Bring the family, bring your friends and bring something beautiful back. The proprietors Mike and Christina Gannon will be happy to see you. Tell them POND Trade magazine sent you!

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Watch the full step-by-step install video on our YouTube channel (Atlantic Water Gardens TV): youtu.be/cxosUWAaGG0

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Kodama Koi Food Grows Champion Koi and is Back in Stock from Japan!

Kodama Koi Food Color Up and All Season shipments have just arrived from Japan to be sold for both wholesale and online at www.kodamakoisupply.com/koi-food.

Manda Fu is also now back in stock! Some call it koi crack, because this irresistible and highly digestible koi food is great for feeding your koi all year round. The formula includes a popular Japanese health supplement, Manda Nishiki, to improve health and the lustrous color of your koi, all while feeding them from the palm of your hand. If you enjoy the time spent feeding and petting your koi, you will want to have Manda Fu on hand year round.

According to Taro Kodama of Kodama Koi Farm, "Our koi food recipes were developed by my father and koi expert Mamoru Kodama, founder of Kodama Koi Farm. ColorUp is designed to enhance the color and health of koi scales because it includes high quality spirulina. All Season Wheat Germ is formulated for maximum koi growth and health, and its digestibility will allow you to feed your koi all year round."

Hi Silk 21 is another popular koi food used to produce a beautiful champion-grade sheen in the colors of Japanese koi and a silky white shiroji. The growth rates of Nishikigoi have also been noticeably faster than other high-protein foods, without causing the stomach of Nishikigoi to bulge and harm the body conformation. This is the same food used to grow many Kodama Champion Koi fish.

The company's flagship products, Kodama Koi Food All Season and ColorUp, are available in floating pellets, in both medium and large sizes. Also available is the very popular Hi Silk. They are now also featuring Hikari Wheat Germ Koi Food. Many varieties of high-quality koi food are now back in stock and available online for producing the most beautiful koi fish from Japan.

Also available by Kodama is the Koi Food Guide blog, which outlines the details of selecting koi food, important ingredients, storing tips and the best types of koi food for growth and color.

Visit www.kodamakoisupply.com for all Kodama Koi Food options. Also visit www.kodamakoi.com/wholesale for wholesale koi food and bulk orders.

**Blue Thumb's New Ripple Fountain**

The Triple Stone Ripple Fountain provides a unique way to add interest to your landscape with its smooth, rippled sides. The kit comes complete with the molded basin and everything you need for professional installation. Stand out by offering professional-grade fountains from Blue Thumb.

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Aquascape Launches High-Flow External Pond Pumps

Aquascape Inc. announces its first line of external pond pumps as an alternative application to submersible pumps in large ponds and water features. Aquascape EXT Pond Pumps provide high flow rates and are ideal for recirculating water in recreational ponds that require an external pump.

The EXT Pond Pump comes in four different models, including two single-phase motors and two 3-phase motors ranging in max flow rates from 12,500 to 18,400 gph. These high flow rate options make EXT pumps perfect for supplying water to waterfalls, wetland filters and water jets. EXT pumps are mounted on a mechanical pad near the water feature. The oil-free design and a low-RPM, fan-cooled motor ensure quiet operation and a long life backed by a five-year limited warranty.

"We decided to add this line of EXT pumps to meet the growing consumer demand for external pumps commonly used in recreational style ponds," says Dave Kelly, vice president of product development for Aquascape Inc. "Pond contractors can now rely on Aquascape to meet the exact specifications needed for their large-scale projects requiring external pumps."

The EXT Pump Plumbing Kit (#48027 sold separately) provides all the necessary fittings and valves to make the pump simple to install, prime, and operate. Once primed, the pump can be switched on and off without priming if water remains in the suction line. Look no further than the Aquascape EXT Pond Pump for water features requiring non-submersible, external pumps.

For more information about Aquascape and our full line of water feature products, visit aquascapeinc.com or call 866/877-6637 (US) or 866/766-3426 (Canada).

**Your Pond Farm Announces Virtual Vendor Showcase Dates**

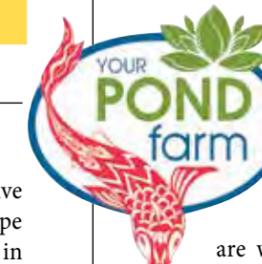
Your Pond Farm is honored to invite you to take part in their upcoming 2021 Virtual Vendor Showcase on Wednesday, Oct. 13 and Thursday, Oct. 14. This online exhibition is an excellent opportunity for professionals in the pond and water garden industry to view top manufacturers latest offers and new products.

Your Pond Farm will be hosting a website for their virtual two-day event. All pond professionals, contractors and landscapers are welcome to attend. Retailers use the show as part of their strategic planning for 2022. Customers can place discounted orders on the show website for their upcoming season. All attendees will have access to hot buys, cash backs, fall specials, new products, prizes, giveaways and catalogs. They will also be able to place their orders right on the website. There is no cost for the showcase.

Your Pond Farm provides their customers with a one-stop shopping and shipping experience for all their water gardening needs. Customers can receive products right off Your Pond Farm's trucks to their doorstep or ship product from their new shipping facility. Your Pond Farm is a long-term innovator and specializes in internet fulfillment.

Sign up for the trade show today by calling 877/412-3276 or emailing sales@yourpondfarm.com.

You can also find Your Pond Farm online at www.yourpondfarm.com.





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Aquascape Announces Theme and Schedule for Pondemonium Online 2021

Aquascape Inc. announces "Collaboration NATION" as the theme for this year's virtual Pondemonium, the industry's preeminent event for water feature professionals around the world. Contractors, retailers and distributors from all continents are invited to register and join the free online event from the comfort of their home, office or even pondside. Pondemonium Online 2021 will be held on Aug. 27 with the schedule of events airing from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. CT and a replay of all sessions scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m. CT.

Pondemonium offers a full schedule of informative, inspirational and motivational presentations starting with an opening keynote delivered by Greg Wittstock. Presentations cover a wide range of business and construction topics and will be led by familiar and popular industry experts. The event will close with an awards ceremony honoring the accomplishments of Certified Aquascape Contractors. Registration is free for anyone wishing to attend this year's online event.

To view the event schedule and register for Pondemonium Online 2021, visit www.pondemonium.com.

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