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Winners

2021 Water Artisans
of the Year p. 10



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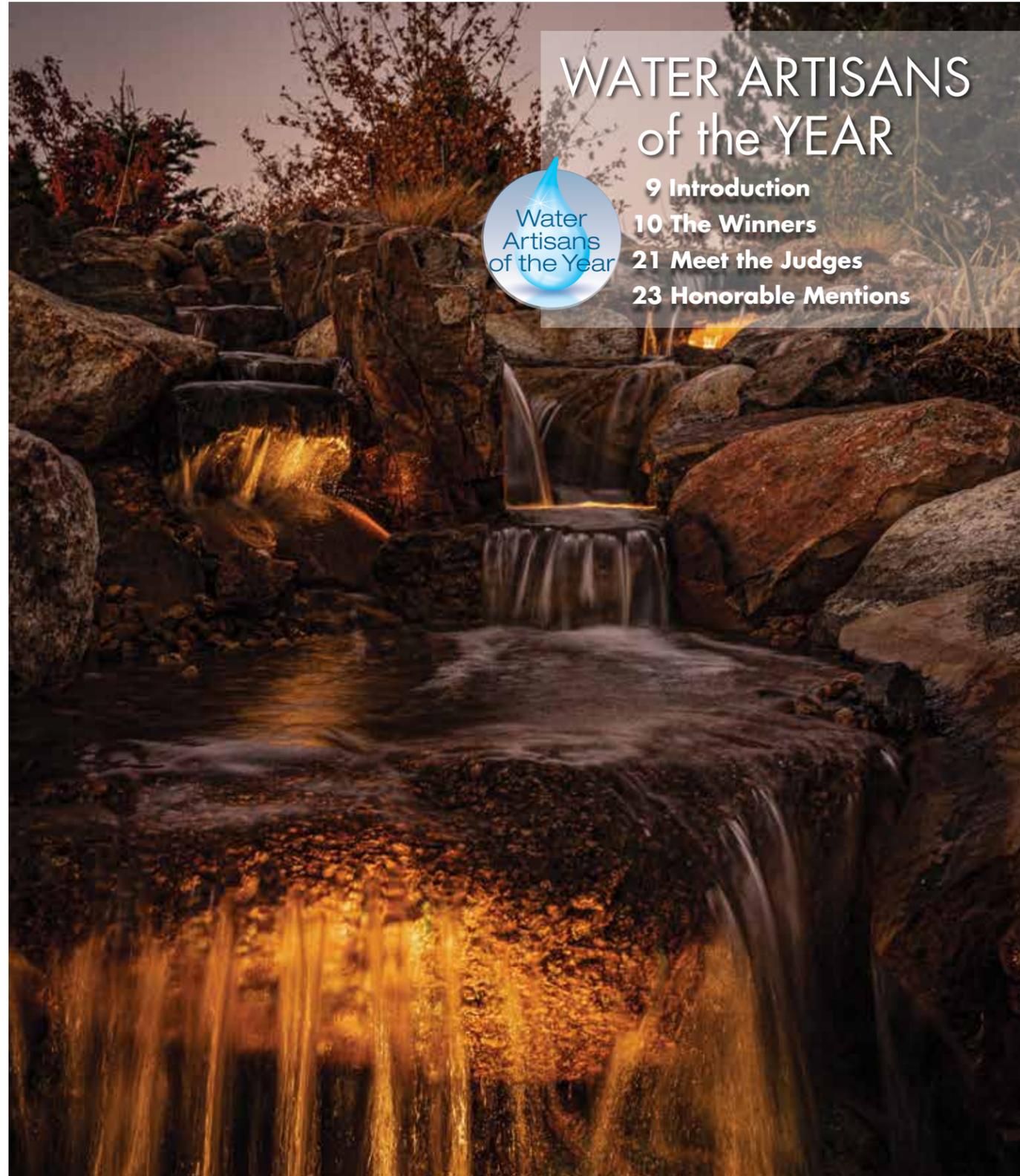
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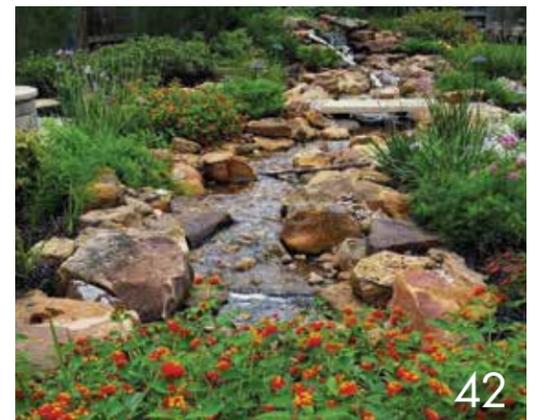
The annual Atlantic/OASE Professional Conference was held in December, and **Demi Fortuna** has the rundown of this year's big winners.

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Upcoming Events

2022

March 2 - 4

Water Garden Expo
Heart of Oklahoma Expo Center
Shawnee, Oklahoma
www.wgexpo.com

March 11 - 13

Central Florida Koi and Goldfish Show
Avanti Palms Resort
Orlando, Florida
www.cfks.org

March 19 - 20

46th Annual Koi show, ZHA So Cal Chapter
Garden Civic Center
Gardena, California
www.znaamerica.org/koi_shows

April 5 - 7

National Hardware Show
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas, Nevada
www.nationalhardwareshow.com

April 9 - 10

San Diego Koi Show
Del Mar Fairgrounds
San Diego, California
www.koiclubofsandiego.org

May 28 - 30

Louisville Koi and Goldfish Show
3821 Hunsinger Lane,
Louisville, KY
www.louisvillekoiclub.com

August 27 - 30

Pondemonium
Q Center
St Charles, Illinois
www.aquascapeinc.com

October 19 - 21

Hardscape North America
Kentucky Exposition Center
St Charles, Illinois
www.hardscapena.com

Are you attending an event that you think others should know about? Are you hosting an event and want more people to come? Send event information to llgelles@pondtrademag.com.



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Publisher's Perspective

Don't Judge Me!

Or, should I say, I'm so glad I'm not a judge this year! Granted, the Supreme Stream Court does all the judging for our Water Artisans of the Year contests (see pg. 21), and then I process all the entries. But still — I wouldn't want to have to make those decisions,



especially this year (our largest contest to date). You guys (and gals!) out there are tremendously talented. Touche!

That's right, I said "gals." We were so pleased to have our first female finalist this year, April Dugan of American Waterscapes. Her breathtaking waterfall build came in as the runner-up in the Most Naturalistic category. Congrats to April, and we hope her accolades will inspire a whole new wave of contest entrants

in the years to come. I love to see it!

Our newest category, Rock Artisans, was also a huge hit, racking up more submissions than both of our staple categories, Best Pondless and Best Under \$15k. We left it up to artistic interpretation, and a lot of you literally moved land and sea to come up with your creative concepts. We salute you and your larger-than-life endeavors, and I know our readers will too.

Our artisans aren't the only thing rocking it in this mega-issue. On pg. 28, we jump in the work truck with Steve Sandalis and ride through the Sierra Nevadas for a special mountain-top pond build unlike any other ("A Pond Away From Home"). There's nothing easy about building a large-scale waterscape so far from your home base, but with a lot of talent and a little bit of local luck, the end result was breathtaking. I love it when things fall into place!

Kelly Billing is also back with tips for choosing the right aquatic plants for the water garden ("Knowledge Is Power," pg. 37). The key to successfully keeping aquatic plants is knowing your environment and which types of plants can thrive in it. This information hasn't always been readily available, but thanks to modern technology and Kelly's guidance, the future has never been brighter for water gardens in all zones.

Happy PONDering!

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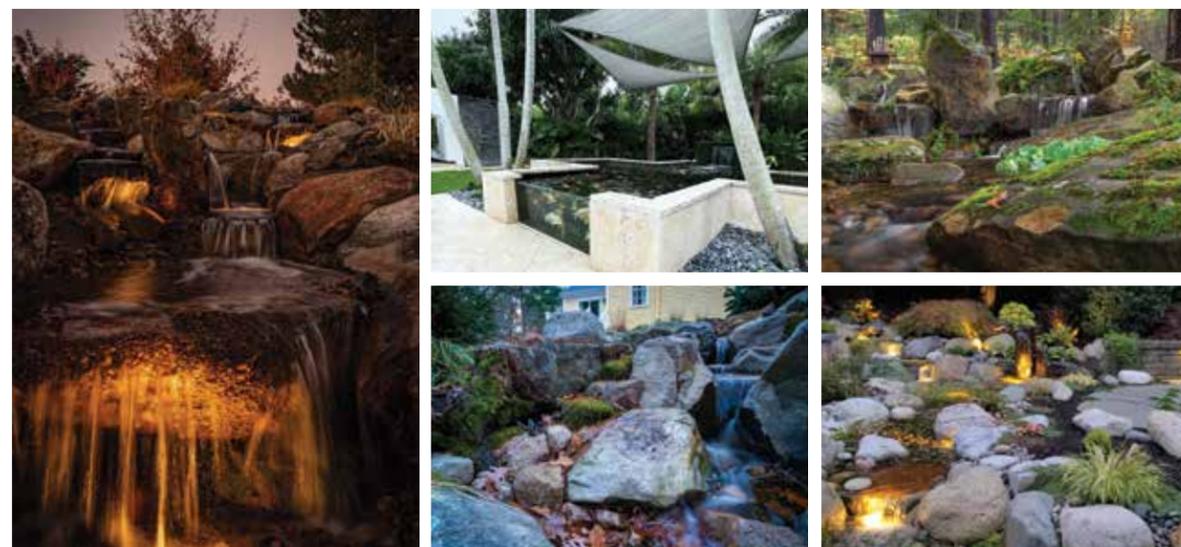


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| Water Artisans |



Water Artisans of the Year Winners

Sixth annual contest sees first three-time winner, female finalist

by **Jordan Morris,**
POND Trade magazine

In a year that saw record-breaking property values all over the place, 2021 also saw the most-ever entries in POND Trade magazine's Water Artisans of the Year contest (almost 70!). Coincidence? We think not!

Just like 2020, many pond-loving clients found themselves spending more time at home, which naturally meant more home improvement and enhancement projects. That's precisely where the Water Artisans of the Year came in, and as you'll see on the following pages, they absolutely crushed it this year.

There were a few firsts in year's contest, too, including the crowning of our first-

ever three-time winner — Tim Wood of Aquatic Edge Consulting — and the first placement of a female pond builder, April Dugan of American Pondscapes, runner-up in the Most Naturalistic category. Special kudos to Bobby Kenyon of C.E. Pontz Sons as well, who racked up his contest-leading sixth finalist ranking, with two wins and four runner-up placements since the competition kicked off in 2016.

As in previous years, we collected project submissions in five categories and presented them to this year's independent judging panel with no brand names or contractors' identities revealed. (Meet the judges on pg. 21!) This year's categories were Best Pondless, Most Naturalistic, Best Project Under \$15,000, Fountains & Formal Features, and new

this year – Rock Artisans. We left the last category up to interpretation, and we're sure glad we did. While Best Pondless and Most Naturalistic remained the most popular, we received some amazing entries for Rock Artisans that highlighted the innovative placement and sourcing of rock to orchestrate the movement of water. These entries really made a splash!

We required a \$25 fee with every submission, which culminated in approximately \$1,700 donated to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, an award-winning charity that provides cutting-edge treatment to children without requiring payment.

Now, without further ado, your Water Artisans of the Year of the 2021 pond season!



Shane Hemphill & Heath Webb



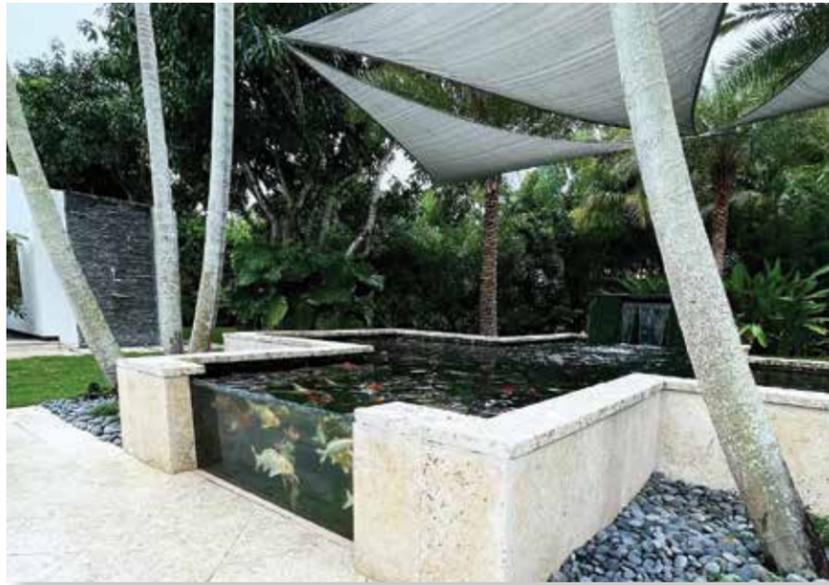
Shane Hemphill and Heath Webb are Colorado-based Art of the Yard LLC. With over 50 years of combined experience serving metro Denver and beyond, Art of the Yard strives to provide customers with the best in quality and service. This is Art of the Yard's second win in this contest.

There is perhaps no winner more appropriate for this year's newest category than the masterminds at Art of the Yard, which is located in the Rocky Mountains just outside Denver, Colorado. This is Shane Hemphill and Heath Webb's second win and third overall placement in the contest.

Ironically (and impressively), they had to start with a completely flat backyard to lock in this Rock Artisans award. In doing so, truckload after truckload of soil was brought in to construct a natural berm for a pondless waterfall, with three distinct starting points leading to multiple falls. In total, the feature manages to pump 21,000 gallons of water per hour.

Hemphill, Webb and their team used a carefully selected mixture of moss rock, granite and cobblestone to get the job done right. At night, purposefully designed lighting arrangements bring this feature to life for the customers' enjoyment around the clock.





Erick Santana

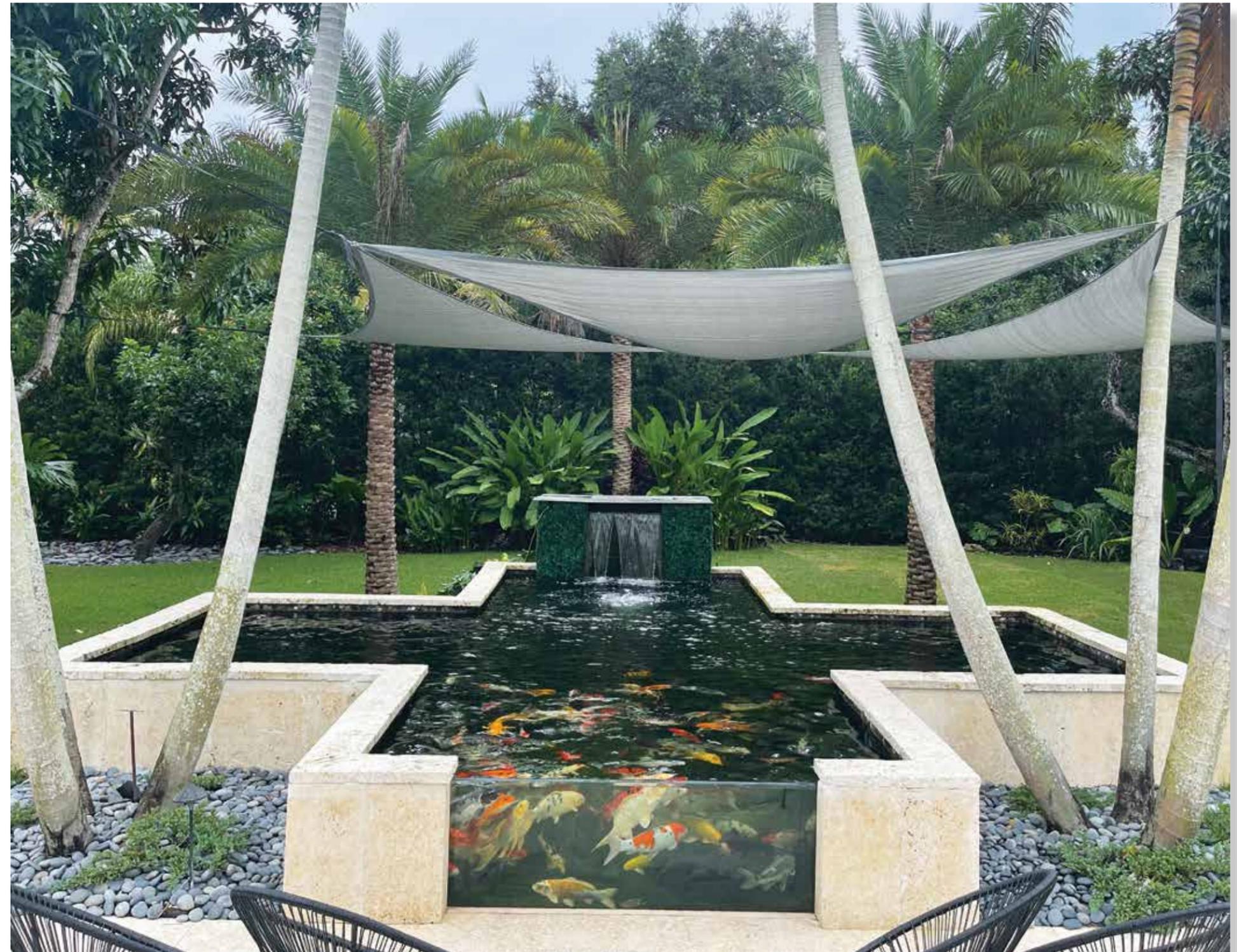


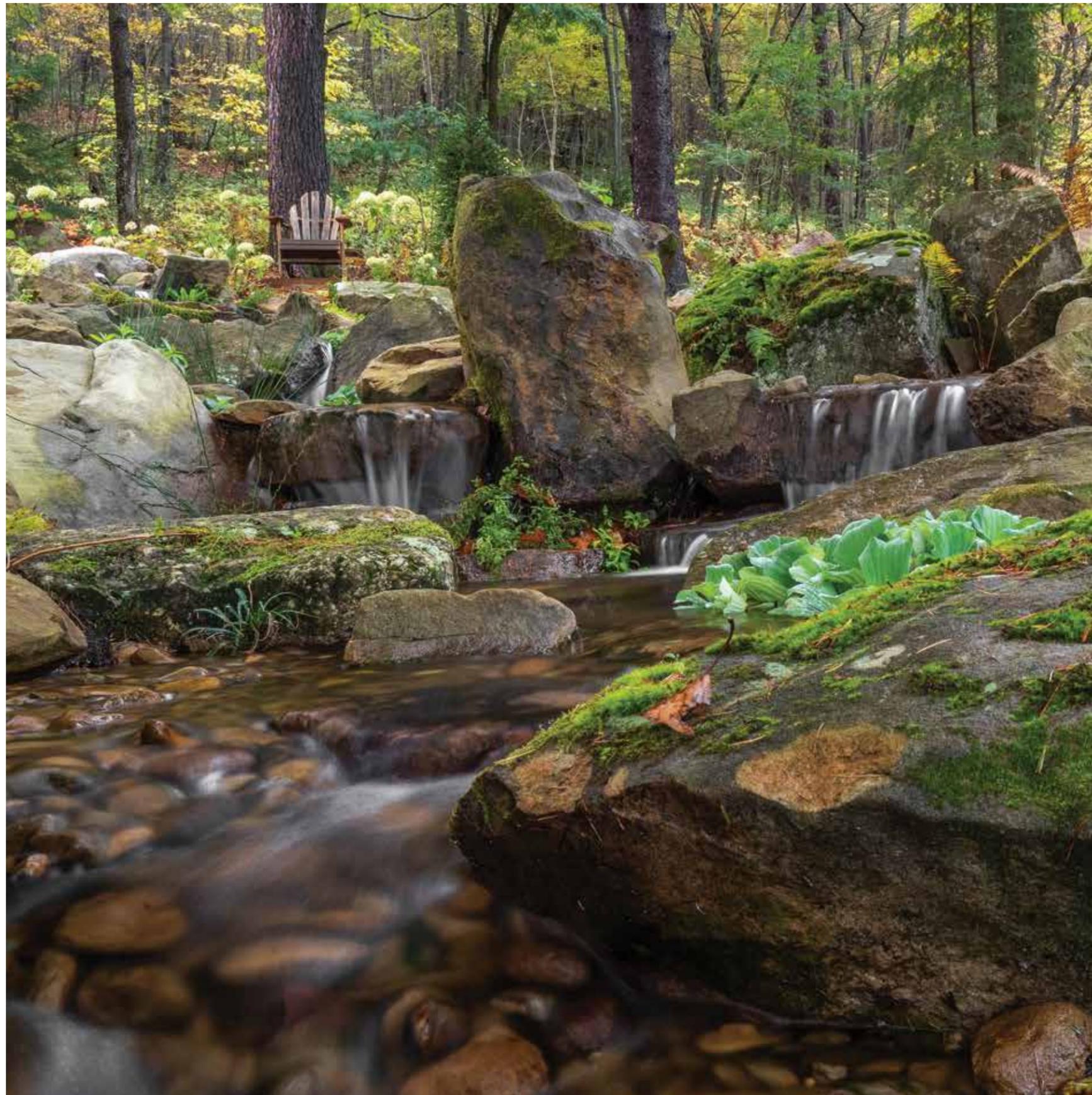
Erick Santana, also known as the Pond Pirate, is a pond builder who specializes in concrete framing and construction. He has been professionally building ponds for 17 years. Santana's mastery of several different styles of pond building has fortified his reputation for building one-of-a-kind koi and tropical fish ponds across South Florida.

If you were to travel South Florida in search of the region's newest jaw-dropping koi-viewing experience, 'X' would naturally mark the spot.

In this case, however, the treasure is too exquisite for an underground burial. Instead, Erick Santana, the Pond Pirate himself, designed this elevated concrete koi pond with his customers' viewing pleasure in mind. A 1 1/2-inch thick laminated viewing window fabricated from Starfire Glass unlocks the secrets of this bustling 10,000-gallon concrete koi pond, whose depth reaches 5 feet at its deepest point.

Santana and his crew framed out the pond using No. 4 rebar and 4,000-psi shotcrete poured at 8 inches thick. A Diamond Brite finish applied to the inside of the pond cooperates with a 20-cubic-foot concrete moving-bed filter to guarantee clean water and unobstructed views of the below-surface activity. This doubles as a degassing mechanism for the direct-suction filter system, which consists of a 36-inch bead filter, a 3-Horsepower pump and two 110-watt UV light filters.





Tim Wood

Tim Wood is a Master Certified Aquascape Contractor and the owner of Aquatic Edge Pond & Landscape Solutions, a full-service design, repair and installation company in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. He is the first three-time Water Artisans of the Year winner and was named Aquascape Inc.'s 2020 Artist of the Year.



As time moves on, the Water Artisans of the Year contest and Aquatic Edge Consulting's Tim Wood have practically become synonymous. This project, which he designed to mimic a spring-fed stream and pond, clinched his third win in the contest — the most of any contractor to date.

A 40-foot stream meanders through the mountainside landscape and feeds a large-scale pond measuring 15 by 25 feet, with just over 3 feet of depth. Upon first glance, it's impossible to tell that this natural waterscape was ever touched by human hands. Mossy boulders and native-style plantings — both aquatic and terrestrial — round out the scene as a perfect backdrop for this remote aquatic locale.

For the client's viewing enjoyment, a small patio observation area serves as the only hint of nearby civilization and the sole reminder that this precipitous pondscape was handcrafted by a decorated Water Artisan, and not Mother Nature herself.





Diego Asturias & Dan Peterson



Diego Asturias and Dan Peterson own Fontana Ponds & Water Features in British Columbia, Canada, which expanded from a landscape construction and maintenance company to a full-time water-feature builder in 2019. They have a passion for water and a hunger for continuously learning new techniques and developing their artistry.

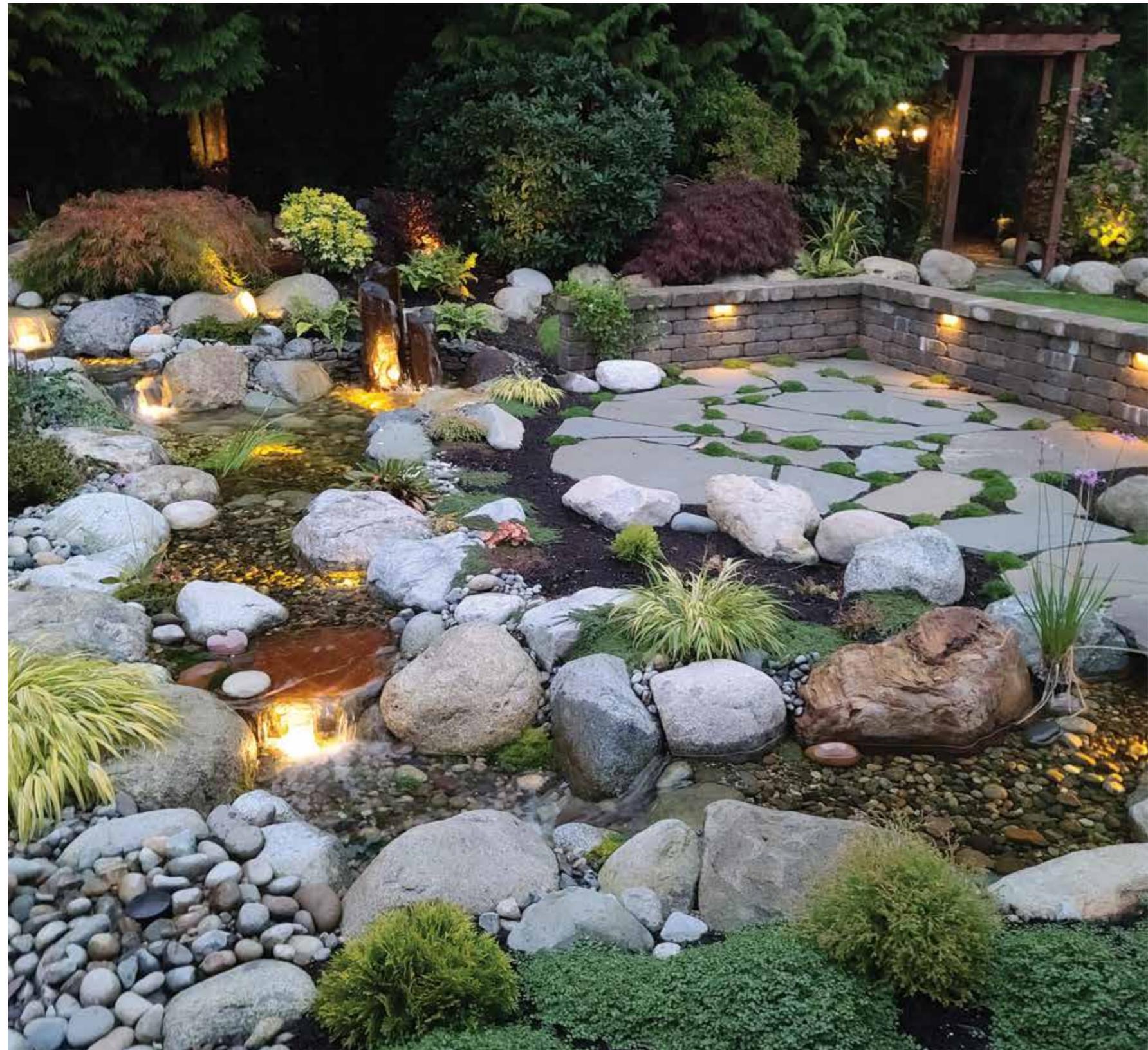
techniques and developing their artistry.

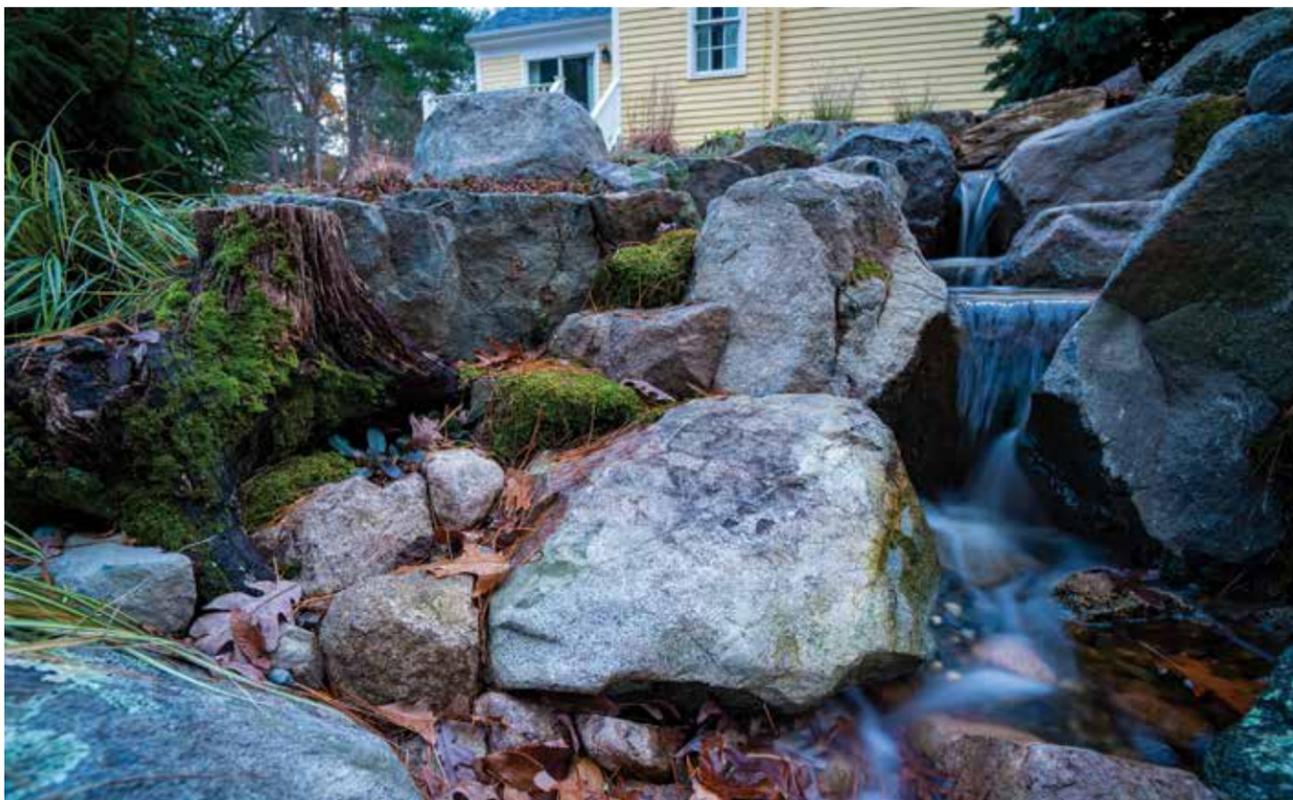
Sometimes the best projects spawn from existing features in need of a little professional tender loving care.

When Diego Asturias and Dan Peterson arrived on this scene, they encountered a 10-foot pondless waterfall that was having trouble holding water. Even worse, the feature was practically out of sight from all major viewpoints of the client's home.

Asturias and Peterson applied their craft to construct two separate pondless features with one larger reservoir, completely revamping the landscape and rejuvenating the former fledgling feature.

The main stream is 25 feet long with four cascades, a deep stream area and three basalt gurglers. A second stream is 15 feet long with a spillway bowl for its head waters. Perhaps most importantly, a new overhead bluestone bridge leads to a destination seating area, allowing the homeowners to finally enjoy their yard's undulating upgrade.





Jonathan Marston

Jonathan Marston built his first water feature at the age of 18 for his grandparents in Massachusetts. After high school, he moved to British Columbia, where he studied water features and interned with Streamworks Designs in Vancouver. He is a Master Certified Aquascape Contractor and currently owns and operates FallingWater Scapes in Dover, Massachusetts.



Feet away from a nature trail, this 10-foot pondless waterfall fits right in with the natural scenery. With more than 4 feet of elevation change, Jonathan Marston and his crew had the opportunity to use large machine-placed boulders to make this feature feel as though it had always existed here in this very spot.

Given the close proximity to the woods, they also took advantage of the surroundings, collecting moss, repurposing a stump and harvesting a few weathered boulders from the client's own yard to give the project a particularly home-cooked feel.

It's particularly shocking that this feature was originally installed for just \$14,660. Marston has since returned to fill in the space with additional landscaping and a custom tree package that features additional native plantings.

Today, all passers-by — including the homeowners, mountain hikers and the local wildlife — can reap the benefits of the beauty and sustenance provided by these incomparable cascades.





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| The **Judges** |



Top, left to right: Tim Dille, Paul Amos & Eric Arnston. Bottom, left to right: James Chubb, John Schwarzlose, Brian Helfrich & Russell Owen.

The Supreme Stream Court

Meet the contest's aquatic adjudicators

by **Jordan Morris**,
POND Trade magazine

As in previous years, the 2021 “Supreme Stream Court” blindly evaluated submissions in five distinct categories. In order to be considered eligible, projects must have been completed between Nov. 1, 2020 and Nov. 1, 2021. We were happy to accept multiple entries from the same contractor; however, each project could only be submitted in one category for consideration.

We were thrilled to welcome to the panel four out of the five winners from last year’s contest, who agreed to forgo participating as contestants and instead provide their expertise alongside three other well-known builders, designers and business

professionals from across the industry. The magazine’s editorial staff then collected rankings for each of the five categories and calculated the winners.

The judges who served on this year’s panel, in alphabetical order, were:

After 14 years as the managing member of his own sales company, **Paul Amos** accepted a position as a sales representative with Kasco Marine Inc. Since 1992, Paul has sold, assisted in design and installed liners and aeration for residential ponds, golf course lakes, parks and recreation features, and water and wastewater treatment facilities.

Eric Arnston won in the Best Under \$15,000 category in last year’s contest. He started his



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West Palm Beach, FL

design-build landscape business in Austin, Texas, in 2003 and eventually followed his intuition to focus solely on water features. Arnston is an artist at heart who enjoys using natural elements to their fullest potential while building water features for the whole family to enjoy.

James Chubb has focused on doing water features for the green industry for the past 22 years. Having worked at the distributor level in sales and education and at the manufacture level in sales and education, he is currently working for Atlantic-OASE as the director of product training and systems.

Tim Dille took home the 2020 award for Best Pondless feature. He is the lead designer and installation foreman at Garden State Koi, a full-service retail, maintenance, installation and wholesale pond store in Warwick, New York. Dille has been installing ponds, streams and waterfalls for more than 15 years, with more than 500 water features in the ground.

Brian Helfrich is the vice president of construction at Aquascape Inc. He has designed and installed thousands of water features around the world and has trained hundreds of contractors across the country on the technical and artistic aspects of pond building. Helfrich's portfolio includes projects at Orlando's EPCOT International Flower and Garden Show and Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo.

Russell Owen won in 2020 in the Fountains and Formal Features category. He started Anything Wet, a full-service pond company, in August 2004. As a member of Aquascape Australia's mentoring program, he assists new and beginning pond builders in creating natural, ecofriendly ponds and water features.

John Schwarzlose, the 2020 winner for Most Naturalistic, is the owner of Freshwater Ecosystems in Texas Hill Country. He has a passion for designing and building water features that are indistinguishable from mother nature. Schwarzlose's company provides unique, naturalistic designs for ponds, creeks and waterfalls.

| Runners-Up |



Runners-Up
Silver medalists
take the pond platform

by **Jordan Morris**,
POND Trade magazine

Second place is far from defeat — instead, it's tangible proof of greatness and a solid motivator for future success. Check out the runners-up in this year's contest on the following pages.

POND Trade magazine is proud to host the independent, unsponsored Water Artisans of the Year contest on an annual basis. The objective of the event is to level the playing field for all contractors, regardless of company size or affiliation, and provide recognition for projects that raise the bar in pond construction. We'd like to send a huge thanks to all our judges who presided over this year's contest. We couldn't do it without you! We were also proud to donate \$1,700 to St. Jude Children's Hospital on behalf of some of the most elite talent in the pond and water garden industry.

Now in its sixth year, the Water Artisans of the Year contest has become a staple in the pond and water-gardening industry. As you peer down your 2022 project pipeline, ask yourself — do you have what it takes? Be sure to document and photograph your work, because the eligibility period has already begun. We can't wait to see what you've got in store for us; we'll start accepting entries this fall. Next thing you know, you could see your own artistry gracing these pages next year!

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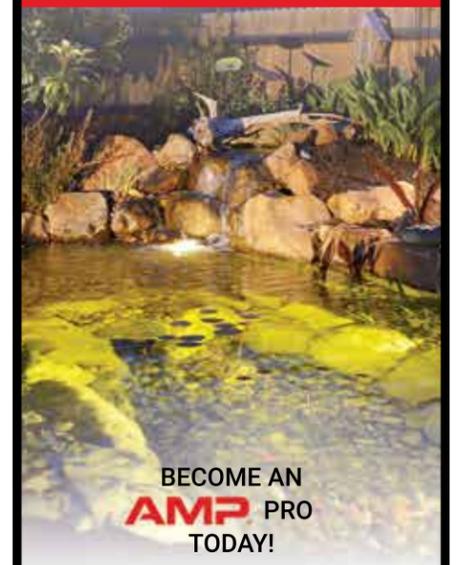
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Water Artisans of the Year



Runner-up **Most Naturalistic**

April Dugan

American Waterscapes
www.americanwaterscapes.com

With picturesque views from the master suite, kitchen and outdoor living space, a majestic waterfall spanning 6 feet wide makes a shallow drop into a large pool. Two spillways guide the water as it winds its way through large, mossy granite boulders, driftwood and native plantings. The average spectator might logically ask themselves, which came first — the home or the waterfall?



Runner-up **Rock Artisans**

Bobby Kenyon

C.E. Pontz Sons
www.cepontzsons.com

Summer 2021 saw a major renovation and upgrade for this existing pond, with a complete reconstruction of the top wetland area, an extreme redesign and buildout of the waterfall area, and the installation of a new fish cave. Rocks now completely define this feature, with multiple falls cascading down the hillside in what might be easily mistaken for a Midwestern mirage.



Water Artisans of the Year

Runner-up **Best Pondless**



Scott McIlwee

BEE Landscaping
pondsbybee.com

Nearly 24 tons of rock in various shapes and sizes comprise this beautifully landscaped outdoor space, which doubles as a play area for the neighborhood children. Two rushing pondless streams meander through the landscape, trickling by the small, irregular flagstone patios before emptying into two large pooling basins. Enjoyment often spills into the evening hours, thanks to a soothing outdoor lighting arrangement and smokeless fire pit.



Water Artisans of the Year



Runner-up **Fountains & Formal Features**



**Heath Webb
& Shane Hemphill**

Art of the Yard LLC
www.customwaterfeaturesdenver.com

The heart of Downtown Denver never felt so peaceful. A three-spire, polished basalt fountain chiseled from a single stone presides over a 7,500-gallon dedicated koi pond at the front entrance of this urban residence. A third feature — a two-ton, polished basalt stone fountain — marries formal with contemporary to round out this shockingly serene environment tucked within a cityscape.

Water Artisans of the Year



Runner-up
Under \$15k

Tim Wood

Aquatic Edge Consulting
aquaticedgeconsulting.com

A pond for the birds? This soothing pondless waterfall has purpose-designed, low-profile sightlines and streamlined landscaping to allow open, unobstructed views of the seasonal songbirds that are naturally attracted to this active waterscape. Utilization of the space and materials was optimized to cater to the special interest of the clients — a pair of budget-conscious, avid bird watchers.



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A recreational pond is nestled within a ponderosa forest.

A Pond to Write Home About

Recreational ecosystem build in Northern California mountains

by **Steve Sandalis,**
Mystic Water Gardens

As a design-build company based in Southern California, with the state being so large, we often get opportunities to travel up north to do large-scale projects. This time, we were presented the opportunity to do a project nestled in the foothills of Wine Country, close to Lake Tahoe.

Auspicious Beginnings

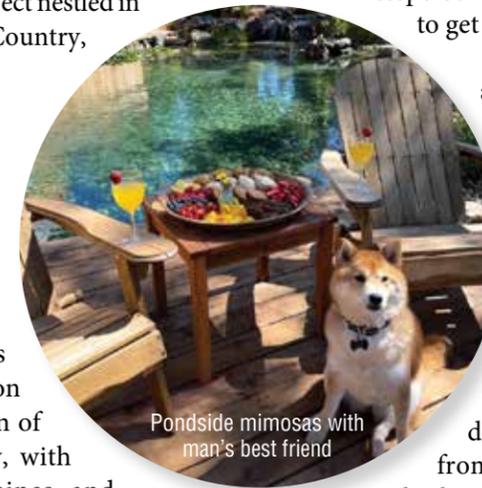
During my first phone meeting with the client, we had an immediate connection over the mountains and the outdoors. Upon hearing the description of his 100-acre property, with mature ponderosa pines and incense cedars, I was quite excited to take a trip and see the location firsthand.

While researching the area and planning my visit, I found a beautiful campground located on the Cosumnes River only miles from the client's property, which sealed the deal for me. It made me feel like all the

pieces were falling into place.

During my first meeting with the client, we walked the site, and my creative juices were flowing as we discussed the perfect setting for a recreational pond. It's not often that you meet a client with whom you totally connect, who has the most perfect setting for a rec pond, and who is a successful businessperson and knows what it takes to get the job done.

As I was leaving the area full of joy for what I knew I could create, a gorgeous black bear ran across the front of my truck. I knew I would be back!



Pondside mimosas with man's best friend

Striking Gold

Some challenges naturally arise when doing a project five hours from home — specifically, the basic logistics of gathering supplies, equipment and additional manpower.

Thirty miles into my journey back to Los Angeles, I started wondering where and how I was going to get the hundreds of tons of rock needed for the project. As I pulled over to get some coffee and fuel up my rig,



I started wondering where and how I was going to get the hundreds of tons of rock needed for the project. As I pulled over to get some coffee and fuel up my rig, like a sign from Poseidon himself, I saw a sign that said, “Rocks for Sale.”

like a sign from Poseidon himself, I saw a sign that said, “Rocks for Sale.” As I shook my head in disbelief, I called the phone number immediately and spoke to a very friendly local who informed me he could get me any rock size and shape that I need from the Cosumnes River — the same place I was camping!

Out of curiosity, I asked him how he was able to get material from the Cosumnes River. He told me the most fascinating story about his wife’s grandfather, who owned 2,000 acres of the original gold mine 200 years ago. While most of the gold miners who arrived there were Americans, the gold rush attracted thousands from Latin America, Europe, Australia and China. The Cosumnes River was — and still is — an important, gold-bearing river!

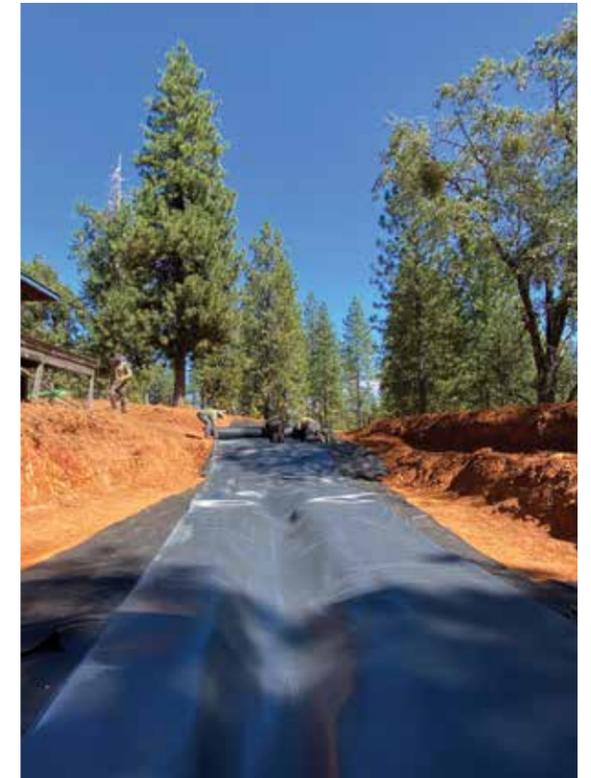
A Local Lift

In another stroke of luck, the gentleman who supplied all the beautiful natural rock had a lot of heavy equipment, so he was able to dig out and grade the rec pond for me, which greatly helped with my logistics problem!

As a designer, I appreciate beautiful work. I noticed that a company I follow on social media was based in the same town where the project was going to be constructed. As the project started to move along, I contacted Verne Pershing, the owner of The Art of Gardening and fellow Certified Aquascape Contractor, and asked him if he wanted to collaborate.

Having a local contractor to help turned out

Because the pond location was sloped (top), we had to construct a very large berm. We used approximately 200 tons of rocks (bottom) and boulders. Some of the rocks were up to 7,000 pounds each.



Renderings (top left) help to show the vision. With any water feature (bottom left), not only is a waterfall a focal point, but it also helps to aerate and move the pond, keeping the water clean and clear. Unrolling a 50-by-100, 2,000-pound Firestone EPDM liner (above) is quite a task!

to be a great asset and alleviated a lot of the research requirement. Pershing was able to help me get some key supplies and was gracious enough make his crew available to help with construction.

Rec Pond Specs

The pond itself was approximately 2,500 square feet (80 by 40 feet) and 6 feet deep. When I designed the rec pond, I wanted it to be set against the beautiful, rustic house to create the look of a lakefront property. After talking with the client about his lifestyle and family, I knew the rec pond needed to be deep, because it would be impossible for him not to want to launch himself off his deck into the cool, refreshing water. Another

Another important design element for me was to create a very low-maintenance environment, because this was only a weekend residence for the homeowner.

important design element for me was to create a very low-maintenance environment, because this was only a weekend residence for the homeowner.

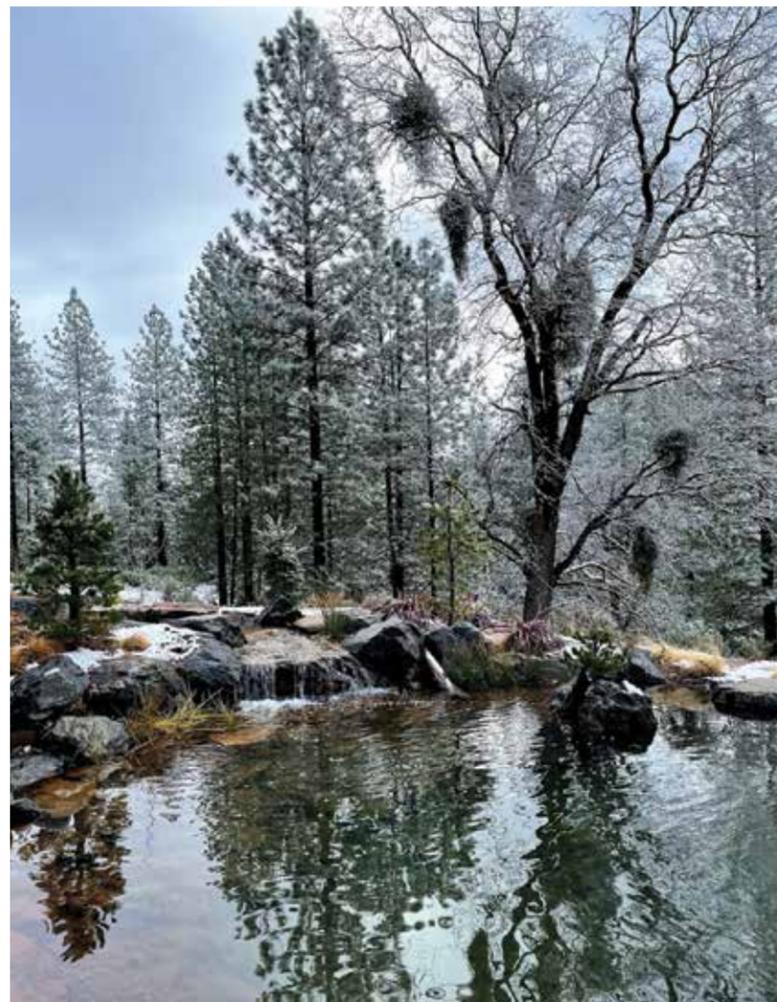
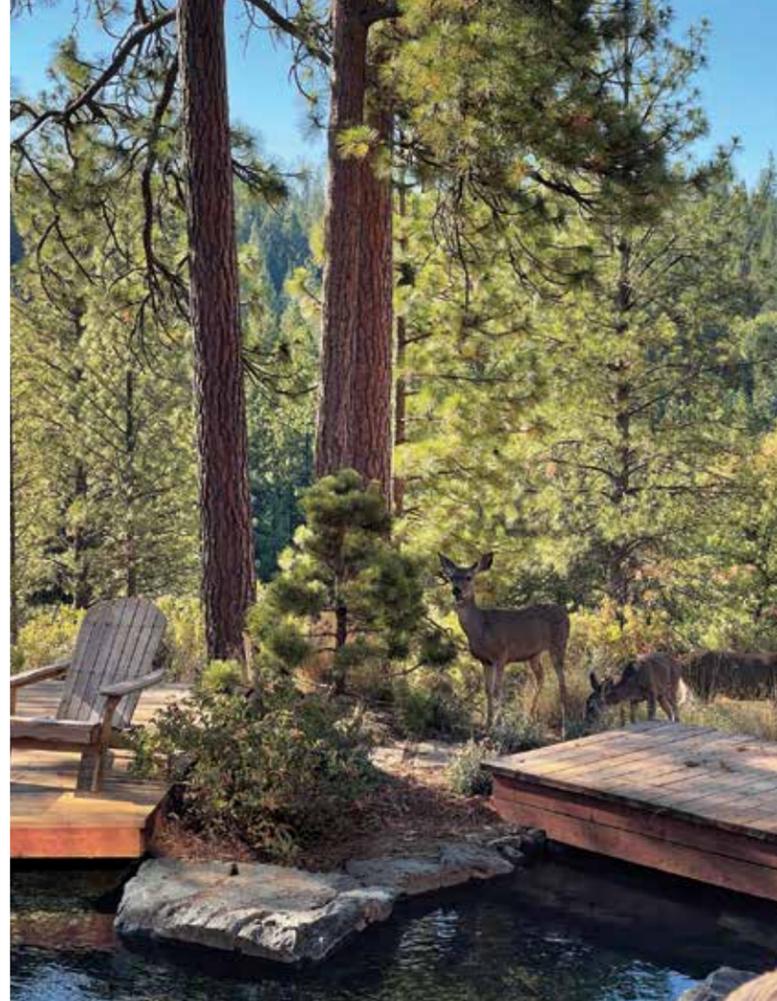
To keep the water clean and clear, I constructed a large wetlands bog filter with a 100-foot stream and multiple

waterfalls. To cater to the homeowner’s lifestyle, I designed a natural swimming hole about the size of a hot tub, where the client can sit and relax on a hot day and cool off. The last design element to help with the low-maintenance aspect was the construction of a skim cove and skimmer to help collect leaves and debris that might fall into the rec pond.

In the design of natural-ecosystem recreational ponds, it is always important for the feature to look like it has always been there. This is best achieved with the use of native plants around the feature to help it blend in.

Picture Perfect

It is always a bittersweet moment



A rec pond can be enjoyed throughout the four seasons (opposite page). The client's favorite times to view his pond are sunrise and sunset.

when we complete an amazing project, especially when it's hours away from our home, because we never know when we might get the opportunity to visit again. It brings the Mystic Water Gardens team a lot of satisfaction that not only do we create beautiful environments for our clients, but we also create habitats for the native wildlife, which over the years is slowly losing its domain.

To our happiness, weeks after the feature was installed, our client started sending us amazing photos of the natural wildlife drinking out of the bog, stream and pond. Building in the incredible weather of Southern California gives us an opportunity to build and design year-round. One small drawback is that we typically do not get to experience our water features in the change of the four seasons. Once again, to our surprise, our amazing client continues to update us with beautiful photos of the pond in all its winter glory. ☘

About the Author

Steve Sandalis has owned and operated Mystic Water Gardens for 17 years.



He is a Master Certified Aquascape Contractor.

Steve, an avid outdoorsman, gets a lot of his inspiration from many of the national parks that he has visited across the

United States and his travels to many far-off islands. What's special about Mystic Water Gardens is their ability to design and build small courtyard water features and large lakes and waterfalls alike. Located in Los Angeles, Steve has built features for some of the biggest names in Hollywood. His design approach centers on innovation and eco-friendliness. The Mystic Water Gardens team aren't just landscapers — they create environments.

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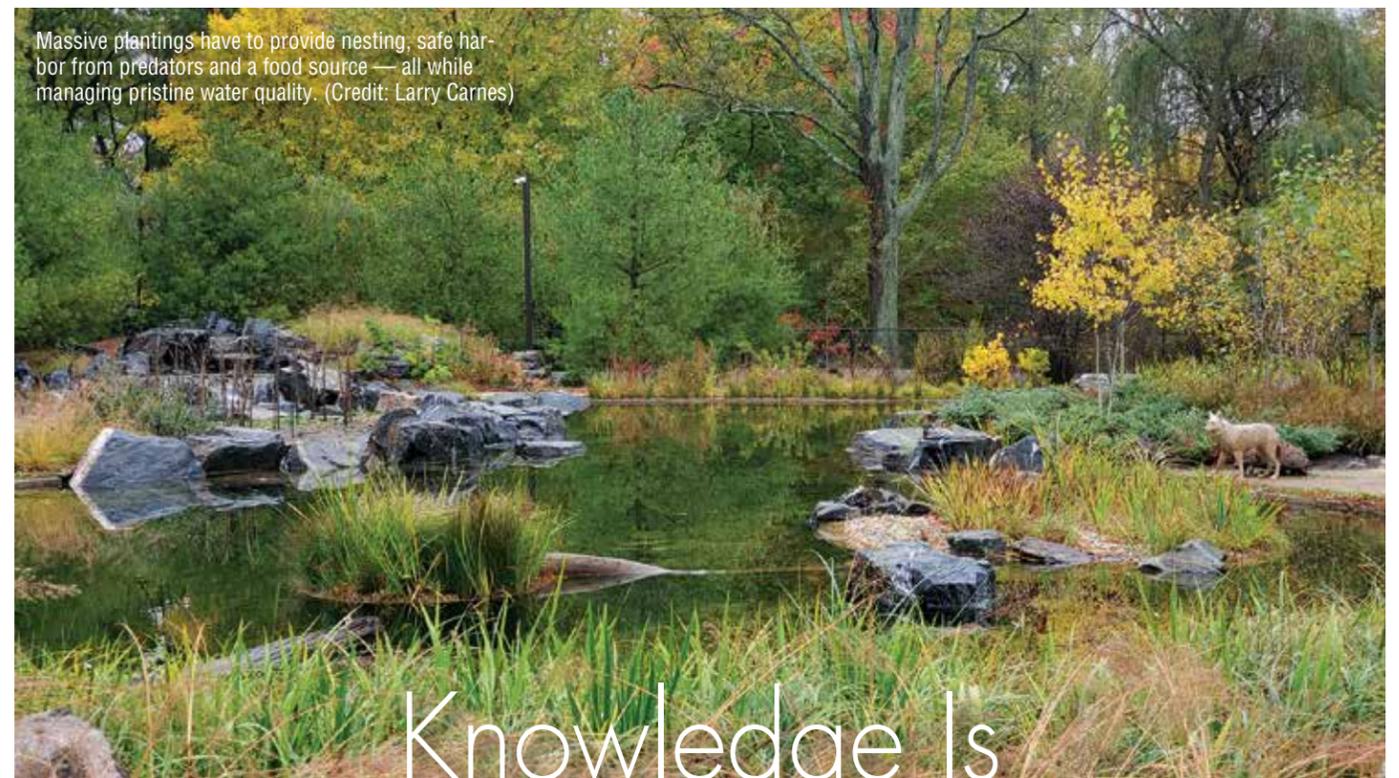
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Massive plantings have to provide nesting, safe harbor from predators and a food source — all while managing pristine water quality. (Credit: Larry Carnes)

Knowledge Is Power

How to find the perfect aquatic plants

by Kelly Billing,

Water Becomes a Garden

When I began my career more than 35 years ago, little information existed about most things aquatic compared to today. Instead of being just a click away, information about individual plants was typically provided via a photocopy through the mail. I would send a check to cover the cost (about 7 to 10 cents per copy) for plant information selected from a hand-typed list of documents of individual plants.

These tidbits of information were largely available from Walter Pagels, the former

International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society (IWGS) librarian for decades. Pagels was also a world traveler, bringing new plants to the United States and sharing them with many along the way. The hand-typed, black-and-white IWGS Journal was also a much sought-after source of new plant knowledge. The IWGS still maintains a library of books, articles and publications via David Curtright. If you are in need of specific information about an individual plant, you can certainly find it there.

Why would I go through all this trouble? I have long been an advocate of incorporating plants into all water features, because there is nothing else out there that can improve water



Large planting beds (top & bottom left) will hold bold planting arrangements to soften and balance the rock work and waterfalls. Planting beds were placed to maximize the benefits of the massive circulation from the two waterfalls. Incorporating more natural planting areas (top right) applies to large and small spaces. Carnivorous plants are slow growers but can thrive when conditions are right. Soil amendments and the water level are important to their success. This plant-loving client wanted to support a lot of diversity in plant selection. Planting beds indirectly in the path of strong water movement (bottom right) will thrive when the water level is high, compared to plants in stagnant areas of the pond.

quality, enhance the ecosystem and add stunning beauty to the landscape. It has, however, been an uphill battle.

Distribution History

In the earlier days, most nurseries were selling locally only or bare-root

through the mail. Mesh baskets were the norm, typically with oozed roots and mud. They were unstable and often fell over. Bare-root plant quality and size consistency were lacking. In the mid-to-late-80s, several aquatic plant enthusiasts blossomed into more tradi-

tional growing operations for aquatic plants. The goal was to meet the needs of a growing industry and make aquatic plants more mainstream. Distributing plants by truck to get them into garden centers and consumers' backyards would foster the love of this special



category of plants.

Changes in growing methods and the introduction of no-hole containers enhanced the ability to transport plants to arrive as a cleaner, more retail and landscape-friendly product. All these processes led to an increased market share for waterlilies, lotus and other aquatic plants.

About 15 years ago, I gave a presentation at a program for pond builders and queried the group of 150 about their use of plants in pond builds. Only 10 contractors were using them at that time — a surprisingly small number! Lack of knowledge and understanding was the noted cause for their hesitation. I am of the

philosophy that you don't start out knowing all the aquatic plants. Start with a few. Get to know them and use them appropriately. Build from there or hire a professional to help you with your plant selection.

The Information Age

More recently, plant usage is up! Now that information is widely available, interest in the aquatic plant hobby is growing significantly worldwide. New waterlilies and lotus cultivars are being created at a rapid pace. Color, flower shape and foliage variations abound. A new database has evolved on the IWGS website (www.iwgs.org).

Goose excrement was so abundant around this office park (top) that it made walking on the sidewalks nearly impossible. Limiting the access via the perimeter with heavy native wildflower plantings proved insufficient to limit goose access. The water was foul and miserably green, so improving water quality was part of the equation. Masses of waterlilies and lotus reduced the visiting population to only a few geese at a time, which was tolerable. The water quality and clarity (inset) remain impeccable since completion.

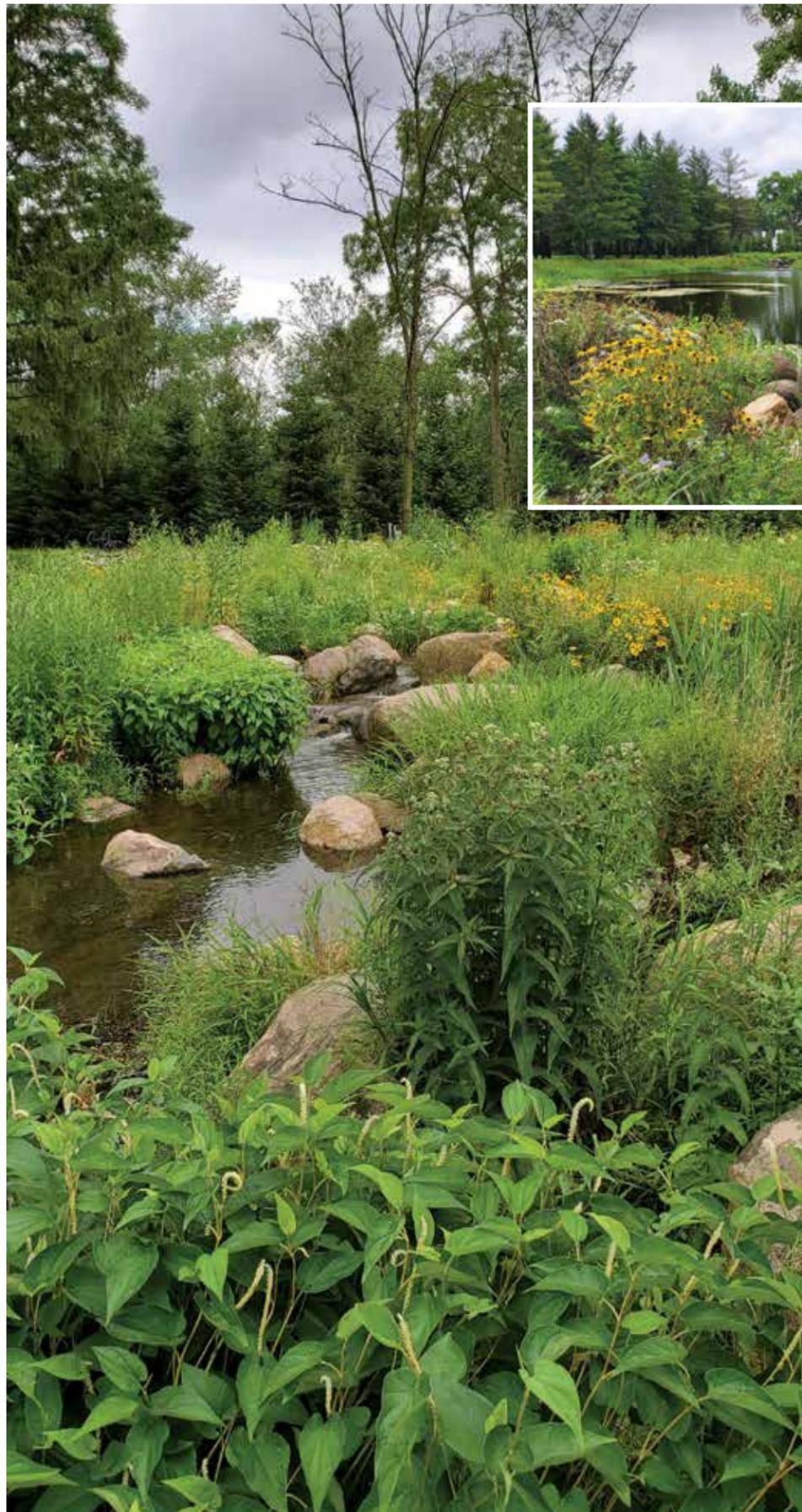
org). The choices available today can be daunting but are also incredibly exciting. It is still collective knowledge and through trial and error that most cases can be made for which plants are

the best choice in certain situations. Experience in the "getting to know each other" phase matters.

More and more contractors are using plants in their projects, and some are taking



Creating a habitat for ducks and turtles (left) is always challenging. Both love to eat plants, and the more they eat, the more waste is generated. While some plants may sustain minor damage from the playful nature of pets (right), most are resilient.



This large farm pond (inset) is surrounded by a horse pasture, so water quality needed to be improved. Massive perimeter plantings added color diversity and plenty of planted shoreline to mitigate nutrient-laden runoff. A 40-by-40-foot wetland bog (left) is abundantly planted to serve as a vegetative filter. (Credit: Larry Carnes)

it to the next level. Large-scale projects require large-scale plantings. Shy or underplanted projects will face challenges with water quality. All too often, large water bodies have plants in pots that are inadequate for long-term health. Large planting beds allow the plants to prosper with little maintenance. Small spaces have criteria, too. It is always about knowing the right plant for the right place.

The planting areas should be appropriate for the overall scale of the project, but they should also be incorporated into areas where moving water will enhance their ability to uptake nutrients and balance the ecosystem. When naturalized areas are planned properly and become established, they support a much more diverse network in the food chain. To name a few, fish have fry; frogs and tadpoles have habitat; and dragonflies are abundant.

Tailor Your Knowledge

Every client has their own personality and wish list. That personality, along with the space and budget, dictates the scale and scope of the project. No matter how you acquire your plant knowledge, the suitability of the plants and their overall influence on the project are key to success. Knowing which plants are going to provide the elements needed to satisfy the client's end goals is critical.

These projects are merely a taste of the diversity encountered from client to client. All of them use plants in different applications to ensure beautification and long-term consideration of water quality. Various methods of circulation are implemented in each of these projects to enhance and improve the efficiency of plants to maintain their respective environments. Special thanks to Larry Carnes for sharing some of these lovely waterscapes. ☺

About the Author



Kelly Billing owns Water Becomes a Garden. She provides planning & design services for appropriate site-specific plant selection. She gives special attention to seasonal interest, nutrient uptake and ecological balance to meet the project goals. Kelly is a grower specializing in new cultivars and plant procurement. She is thankful for her supportive network of quality growers across the country that helps her find the best plants required to suit each specific project destination and design.

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This 16-foot stream and waterfall generated seven referral projects.



This waterfall, short stream, lighting and plants were installed in a front yard by two workers over a 24-hour period — not a major project, but an excellent profit margin!

Bigger Isn't Always Better

Staying small could help profitability

by **Max Taylor,**
Magnolia Ponds

I started out in the pool and water features industry in the early 1980s (before some of you were born!). Early on, if there was a mistake that could be made, I'd find a way to make it. Then, somehow, I found a way to make it again. If you can identify with this, we are kindred spirits. Every entrepreneur has a built-in desire to grow their business, to increase the bottom line and to make their mark in the industry. After all, the experts said bigger is better, and I believed them.

Today, we are bombarded with images of glorious projects on Facebook, in trade magazines, and at our conferences. It is easy to get seduced with the

assumption that multiple crews scrambling in different directions is the only path to becoming successful. But that's not always the case.

The Mental Toll

Picture it. One construction crew is going north while another is going east. Your service crew is scheduled to perform two cleanouts to the south and the tech is headed west. You are out on sales calls. All at once, the leaders of three of your four crews are blowing up your cell phone with questions about service, missing parts and manpower. You can't get to the phone, let alone get them the level of help they need. At this point, your mind races.

"What are they doing? I can't cancel

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This project only took two workers and 4 ½ days, and it led to three more projects in the neighborhood.

my appointments. Why can't they perform with the system I have in place? Is it my fault? Did the tech get to that fourth call? Didn't the crew leaders use the checklist?" (Yeah, right.) Now you are picturing the crew members standing around, sucking up your projects. All this time, life is happening, too. Jim's wife is sick. Tom's child needs to be picked up at school early. Mike's daughter's car broke down. Someone's sister is getting married, so they will be off for three days. And by the way, Mrs. Jones is angry. She got off work early to be home when the cleanout crew arrived, but they never showed. Now, any of this can easily happen at a small operation. But at a medium or large-sized operation? Multiply these headaches by four.

Does Spending Dollars Make 'Cents'?

You had heard or read about an "operations manager" — also known as a savior, or a knight on a white horse who can be trained to make sure the proper materials are ordered, organized for the upcoming job and delivered to the site when needed. This person can also schedule and make the emergency off-schedule delivery in a pinch. This person is no grunt. They must

have fine organizational skills and be able to use a computer and tablet. They must be able to communicate with distribution, vendors, labor and supply yards in a way that will not alienate them. They are your No. 2 guy or gal.

And by the way, Mrs. Jones is angry. She got off work early to be home when the cleanout crew arrived, but they never showed. Now, any of this can easily happen at a small operation. But at a medium or large-sized operation? Multiply these headaches by four.

Let's say they require a base pay of \$50,000. Add your labor burden for worker's compensation, your share of social security, an increase in general liability based on payroll, and (don't forget!) unemployment insurance. This brings the annual cost of this key employee's employment to at least \$68,000.

Oh yeah, the new ops manager also needs a truck. When you add in \$400 per month for a

used truck plus gas and maintenance, the cost comes closer to \$80,000. Based on a 50% margin, you will need to sell an additional \$160,000 in jobs just to break even. This is before benefits or vacation time.

In our industry, even our general labor must be more than grunt labor — people who not only have strong backs, but also have initiative and a sense of sharing in the accomplishment. Each additional general laborer (\$18 per hour) will cost the company \$37,440, or \$51,000 with labor burden. Assuming they work all year, just one laborer will require an additional \$102,000 in gross revenue just to cover costs. (Considering the current labor shortage, this estimate is likely on the low end.) Also remember that building up a larger operation will raise static overhead — more warehouse space, more tools that become lost or broken and more trucks and associated breakdowns. If your hourly employees do not work year-round, you may find your-

self looking for new employees to train and develop every spring (and a higher unemployment insurance rate). But for a smaller company, it is a lot easier to keep a crew busy, even in the winter.

In & Out Ain't Just for Burgers

I have found that a smaller, well-trained crew can complete a really nice waterfall or medium-sized koi pond without me. We are in and out in a matter of two to five days, including some basic landscaping. Although these jobs range between \$6,000 – \$20,000, we have a job that starts Monday, and we see the final check by Friday. There is nothing sitting unfinished in the weekend rains that is keeping me awake. The check is in the bank. We also complete more projects in a year's time with more happy customers talking about us. A month-long project — and I have done many — only gets me one happy customer. But I have found more

jingle in my pocket by concentrating on the smaller jobs. Fewer moving parts means fewer headaches. My experienced crew needs minimum supervision, giving me time to work on the business and sales side (or play golf?).

Large-scale Projects

Two sayings come to mind: "You will not lose money on the job you did not take." "The job you did not take will not keep you up at night."

While taking a larger job may have its rewards, not every job goes as planned. Beware of the pitfalls. Too often, a business owner will take lower margins just to win a spectacular project. Big mistake. Remember, cash flow is king, but profit is his brother.

A problem on a small job is a hiccup. But a similar problem can bankrupt a company if it's on a larger project. One nefarious, overly demanding or slow-paying customer can cost you a lot of sleepless nights. Many nights on larger



Fulfilling a customer's dream — in and out quickly! This high-margin water feature only required a two-person crew.

jobs, although planned carefully, have had me tossing and turning, wondering about the weather, trying to recall if plumbing was completed as designed, or worrying that the flow on the waterfall would meet expectations.

Don't get me wrong. I am not against larger projects. I have done many projects that sold for over \$100,000 in today's dollars. If you are drawn to a larger project, be sure to break it down into smaller components and have a list of backup workers who are willing to work on an as-needed basis. You don't need to multiply your company size for one or two major projects a year.

Be willing to turn down projects for which you are not qualified, or if you have a negative gut feeling or are just plain uncomfortable. And remember, when staying with just a single excellent crew, customers will wait for you if you have a good reputation. They called you for a reason. If they won't wait, then so what?

Do it Your Way

At the end of the day, you have to follow your goals. My goal was to make an above-average living while enjoying what I do. It was never my plan to build

an empire. But by investing good profits, one can build a nice retirement, even with a small business model.

All this being said, I am not against systematic growth. If your goal is to build a larger-scale business — perhaps one that can be sold for megabucks — then go for it! I tip my hat to you. Just do it slowly and methodically. Put a pencil to it to see if you can increase sales enough to justify adding that second crew (which will need to be trained by the current crew, temporarily reducing profits further until they can work on their own). A larger business model usually requires loans with interest, more accounting, reinvestment of profits into the business and the associated headaches if the economy were to take an unexpected downturn. When the time comes, the company may or may not sell for what you think it should. Until then, the key is to make sure you can stay profitable.

Some might feel like I've left money on the table by staying smaller. At 69 years old, I know I am in the sunset years of my career. I really like the free time the smaller business model has afforded me. I have no regrets. A small business model is not for everyone — but it has worked for this cowboy! 🤠

About the Author

Max Taylor is owner and operator of Magnolia Ponds and Water Gardens in The Woodlands, Texas. He entered the swimming pool and pond industry while living in North Carolina in 1982,



then relocated to Texas in 2000. Max has won multiple national awards for design in both the pond and swimming pool industries. He was the recipient of the National Five Star Contractor Award in 2011 for excellence in customer service. He specializes in complex backyard design makeovers but is happy to create a simple pond-free waterfall for his customer.

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by Patrick Simmsgeiger,
Diversified Waterscapes Inc.

Consider a body of water. Some call it a lake; some call it a pond. Others call it a pain. Oftentimes, property owners build a pond or lake thinking that because natural lakes and ponds seem to fare well without any attention, their water feature will as well. This does not hold true for any body of water, be it man-made or natural.

Common Pitfalls

Do these symptoms sound familiar? Your water feature has strange, slimy globs of green stuff covering its surface. Huge mats of a bizarre grass are floating up from the bottom. The water is pea-soup green. Your waterfall has slowed to a trickle. Two of your pumps have ceased functioning, and the remaining pump is making strange noises. One problem is immediately

followed by another, and then another.

First comes shock, followed by a frantic search for competent advice that often leads to confusion and frustration, because out of all the suggestions you have found, not one recommendation is the same. Finally, anger takes hold as the full reality of your situation begins to sink in.

To avoid these pitfalls, you must request budget-planning and maintenance-scheduling input from your lake, pond or stream maintenance provider. Hopefully, you have hired a company with a good background, a proven track record and confirmed references. Hiring a company with a quality reputation and portfolio prepares you to properly care for your water feature and puts you on the road to fully enjoying it.

Deferred Maintenance

By definition, deferred maintenance means that a property owner has put off needed maintenance or repairs, allowing their property to

deteriorate as a result. While this might save money, the longer the maintenance is deferred, the more your property values dwindle, and the costlier it ultimately becomes to repair.

Whether it's postponing nonessential repairs until they become essential or skipping out on regular maintenance until your algae blooms are too much of an eyesore to ignore, there's just no positive spin you can put on it. "Deferred maintenance" is a polite euphemism for negligent care of a water feature. Just like landscapes, waterscapes need regular, consistent maintenance.

Key Maintenance Areas

You want your water



This muck-removal system performs where it's simply inaccessible for conventional equipment.

feature to be a source of joy and beauty in your life — not a thorn in your side. Keeping it healthy and balanced requires regular maintenance of several key areas.

First, better aeration means better air diffusion systems and fountains placed for the maximum impact on your water feature. It will lead to fewer problems with water

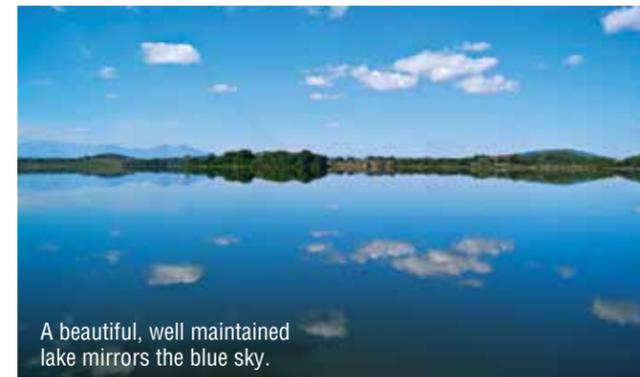
quality, algae, fish kill and all sorts of pesky little nuisances. Filters and regular pump maintenance will handle floating and drifting debris that can clog up your pumps and aerators. This keeps your water flow unrestricted and lets you avoid costly repairs. Other essential physical maintenance includes removing debris with nets and trim-

ming and treating aquatic plants, weeds and algae.

When based on sound research and data collected from a particular lake, the application of chemicals can improve water health with minimal ecological impact. Biological conditioning through the introduction of beneficial fish (e.g., mosquito fish, algae eating fish, catfish) and aquatic plants (e.g., chara, pennywort, cattails) will benefit water clarity and quality. Pests ranging from mosquitos to invasive turtles can be removed using the above methods or more specialized services.

Prevent. Don't Defer.

True lake maintenance requires a complete, multi-faceted approach. It's not



A beautiful, well maintained lake mirrors the blue sky.

just curative; it's preventative. Putting systems in place like aeration and regular physical maintenance solves existing problems and keeps new ones from arising.

On occasion, even the most beautiful water feature will suffer from one or more of these problems. Even when serviced, equipment can break. Unpredictable weather, power outages and unusual runoff contaminants can impact your water feature. However, if regularly scheduled maintenance is performed, you won't find yourself spending a small fortune on new pumps, compressors, liners, shoreline borders or aerators. These devices will generally continue to function as intended if regular maintenance is performed.

Properties often defer

maintenance for long periods of time, and the results tell a familiar story: vast portions of aquatic equipment in disrepair. Some property owners have to take out large loans to buy brand-new sump pumps, pump vault covers, electric wiring, junction boxes — the list goes on, with a price tag in the tens of thousands of dollars. All this could have been avoided with a little preventative maintenance and proper budgeting practices.

The moral of the story? Perform regular maintenance on your waterscapes and on the equipment that works together to keep it up and running, so that your water feature won't be a source of stress and pain. Let it instead bring joy and beauty into your life and the lives of others for generations to come. *CS*

About the Author

Patrick Simmsgeiger is the president of Diversified Waterscapes Inc. (DWI), a certified lake management company and manufacturer of aquatic products for 35 years and counting. A vital supplier for the industry, DWI is maintaining service to its clients during the COVID-19 pandemic with modified work practices and procedures.



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| Language of **Koi** |



These young koi of multiple varieties have several things in common — Doitsu scales and iridescent metallic skin.

No Scales? No Problem!

A deep dive into the Doitsu variety

by **Ellen Kloubec,**
Kloubec Koi

be mesmerizing. Many large Doitsu koi also display a sense of power, making them even more outstanding.

Doitsu koi are gaining in popularity with backyard pond owners. These koi without scales truly are a beautiful addition to any koi pond or collection. They stand out brilliantly in pond water due to the absence of scales, bright colors and a dramatic overall appearance. Metallic-variety Doitsu koi usually have dazzling iridescent skin, which can

What is Doitsu?

By definition, Doitsu refers to koi with no scales other than enlarged scales along the lateral and dorsal lines.

In the early 1900s, Japanese koi were crossed with German mirror carp, a common food source. German mirror carp have large, shiny



Doitsu koi of many varieties, including butterfly, are bred at Kloubec Koi Farm.

scales and stout bodies. Some of their traits became apparent in a percentage of the offspring. Those koi with non-traditional and alternative scalation quickly became known as Doitsu, the Japanese word for “Deutsch,” or German. Since that time, koi have evolved and been cross-bred to produce Doitsu versions of all koi varieties.

Several types of Doitsu scalation have evolved as the result of breeders’ attention to scale development. All are commonly referred to as Doitsu, (DOYT-zoo).

Varieties

There are three types of Doitsu recognized today. Kawagoi refers to leather-back carp, with no scales along the lateral line (flank) and only very small scales on the dorsal line

(back). Kamamigoï, or mirror carp, have large, symmetrical scales along both the lateral and dorsal lines. Finally, scales of Yorogoi may appear on the dorsal line, with the addition of scales elsewhere, often appearing random or jumbled — reminiscent of a warrior’s armor.

There are many koi varieties, and all can be produced with Doitsu scales — even butterfly koi. Doitsu koi are the scaleless equivalent of all other koi varieties. Often the Doitsu koi appear remarkably bright, with very sharp patterns and crisp definition between their colors. These effects are achieved because the pigments are not blurred by traditional scales lying overtop the colors.

When a koi has Doitsu scalation rather than traditional “all-over” scales, the word Doitsu becomes part of the koi’s variety



High-grade Tosai (top left) and other spectacular Doitsu koi were hand-selected for transfer to the grow-out facility. Each one has bright colors, crisp patterns and orderly Doitsu scales. An adult Doitsu Showa (above) is a real eye-catcher. “The twins” (left) strut their stuff.

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name as a prefix (e.g., Doitsu Kohaku, Doitsu Yamabuki Ogon, Doitsu Shiro Utsuri). The exception to the rule is when it becomes a separate variety altogether, as in the case of Shusui or Kumonryu.

Some varieties are always Doitsu, such as Kikusui, Shusui, Kumonryu, Kikokuryu, Beni Kikokuryu and Heisei Nishiki. Shusui is the only Doitsu variety to have a separate classification for judging purposes. Most all other Doitsu koi fall into the general Doitsu class unless they’re a member of the Kawarigoï class. So in most cases, Doitsu koi will compete against fully-scaled koi of the same variety.

What To Look For

First and foremost, buy a koi that you like or are drawn to. If you decide to scrutinize the fish to decide among several koi for a potential purchase, follow these steps.

First, look at the scales. (Yes, you need to evaluate the scales on a scaleless

fish!) Look closely at the scales that are present. Uniformity is the key. Look for well lined-up or symmetrical scales on the dorsal and lateral lines. Scales should be neat, balanced and orderly. Ideally there should be no random or misplaced scales. Doitsu scales are sometimes called a zipper due to the visual similarity.

Next, assess the colors and patterns on the fish, just as you would with all other varieties, especially if you intend to enter your Doitsu in a koi show. Colors and markings should be well defined. Look closely at the depth and consistency of each color. Patterns should be interesting and may be judged using the same method as you would traditional scaled koi.

Evaluate the skin quality and shine. If the Doitsu koi is a metallic variety, vibrancy of the skin is very important. Don’t forget to check out the fins and face of the fish.

Finally, consider the conformation or body shape, disregarding any fish with obvious flaws, defects or damage.

Remember that generally the Doitsu types have a thicker or chunkier body than their fully scaled koi cousins.

There are many very beautiful koi, and just like snowflakes, each one is different. You should purchase what pleases you. Remember that beauty is in the eye of the beholder — and thank goodness for that! ☺

About the Author

Ellen Kloubec and her husband

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



www.kloubekoi.com



Photos by Kathy Cahill

| **New** Waterlilies |

Leading Lilies

2021 New Waterlily Competition Results

by **Suzanne Boom,**
IWGS

In 2021, the International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society (IWGS) once again held its New Waterlily Competition at Naples Botanical Garden in Naples, Florida. This year, we expanded our maximum number of entries from 25 to 30, allowing more hybridizers from around the world the opportunity to submit their best new

waterlilies for evaluation.

The IWGS has held this competition almost every year since 1997 to provide hybridizers an avenue to showcase their creations and innovations while offering them essential feedback (e.g., what traits are desirable to growers and enthusiasts) following evaluation by an expert panel of international judges.

We received entries in each of the following five categories: Hardy, Tropical Day-Bloomer, Tropical Night-Bloomer, Hardy Intersubgeneric and Tropical

Intersubgeneric. A total of 26 beautiful waterlilies were successfully grown out by Kathy Cahill, the aquatics areas manager at Naples Botanical Garden. They were all evaluated by our panel of judges on the quality of the flowers and foliage, as well as the general impression and uniqueness of the plant. The evaluations were made based on growers' notes and photos compiled by Cahill over a 10-week observation period.

Among the judges were professional waterlily growers from botanic gardens

and plant nurseries, as well as hybridizers and experienced hobbyists.

The 2021 judges were:
Andre Leu (Regeneration International, Australia)
Chris Song (South Korea)
CuiWei Yu (Zhejiang Humanities Landscape Co Ltd, China)

USA)
Stevens Bernard (Les Jardin d'Eau de Carzac, France)
Tim Jennings (Longwood Gardens, USA)
Tomas Escribano (Spain)
Vicki Mills Aber (Colorado Water Gardening Society, USA)



Dario Javier Baumgratz (Aeranthos nursery, Argentina)
Dave Brigante (Hughes Water Gardens, USA)
Farley See (Moore Water Gardens, Canada)
Iain MacGregor (Water Garden Life, Australia)
James Allison (Aquapic, UK)
James Bennett (Bennett's Water Gardens, UK)
Jon Sander (Glenstone Museum, USA)
Longqing Chen (Lotus Branch of China Flower Association, China)
Marc Hachadourian (New York Botanic Garden, USA)
Rolf Nelson (Nelson Water Gardens,

After much deliberation, the judges announced the winners of the 2021 IWGS New Waterlily Competition:

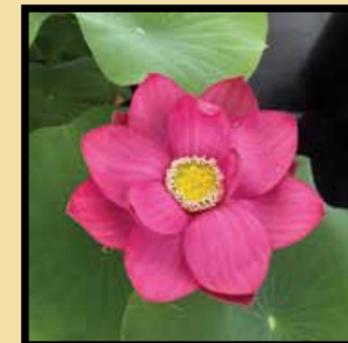
2021 Overall Best New Waterlily
Nymphaea 'Purple Zebra'
By Pornchai Sukkasemsamranjit (Thailand)

2021 Best New Hardy Waterlily
1st place: Nymphaea 'Painted Pom Pom' by Tony Moore (USA)
2nd place: Nymphaea 'Gabriel's Delight' by Timo Gabriel (Germany)
3rd place: Nymphaea 'Sweet Angel' by Potjanee Thongbai (Thailand)



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2021 Best New Tropical Daybloomer

1st place: Nymphaea 'Foi Thong' by Korakott Pumpetch (Thailand)

2nd place: Nymphaea 'Purple Passion' by Florida Aquatic Nurseries (USA)

3rd place: Nymphaea 'Sasimontron' by Arun Kobkaew (Thailand)

2021 Best New Hardy ISG

1st place: Nymphaea 'Purple Zebra' by Pornchai Sukkasemsamranjit (Thailand)

2nd place: Nymphaea 'Siam Magnolia' by Pairat Songpanich (Thailand)

3rd place: Nymphaea 'Dark Valia' by Andreas Protopapas (Cyprus)

2021 Best New Tropical ISG

1st place: Nymphaea 'Ravissada' by Kanyaporn Inngam (Thailand)

2nd place: Nymphaea 'Pimpapaan' by Nopchai Chansilpa (Thailand)

3rd place: Nymphaea 'Sunny Doll' by Neng Xiang You (Taiwan)

2021 Best New Tropical Nightbloomer

1st place: Nymphaea 'Tubtimchon' by Rajamangala Institute (Thailand)

2nd place: Nymphaea 'Aonubon' by Pang U Bon Waterlily Garden (Thailand)

3rd place: Nymphaea 'Bancharak' by Bancha Futrakun (Thailand)

We would like to thank all the hybridizers for offering their creations for evaluation. We also offer our gratitude to the judges who volunteered their time to examine these hybrids and had to make many tough decisions. Thanks also goes out to those who made donations to the IWGS in support of the competition, the IWGS board members and New Waterlily Competition committee members for their contributions and support.

We wish to extend our gratitude to Naples Botanical Garden for generously providing growing space. A special heartfelt thanks goes out to Kathy Cahill and Danny Cox for all their hard work in hosting this year's competition.

The IWGS New Waterlily Competition Committee members will now commence work on the 2022 New Waterlily Competition — the 25th anniversary of the New Waterlily Competition. We will celebrate this milestone at the 2022 IWGS Symposium, which will be held at Naples Botanical Garden. ☘



Nymphaea 'Ravissada'



Nymphaea 'Pimpapaan'



Nymphaea 'Sunny Doll'



Nymphaea 'Tubtimchon'



Nymphaea 'Aonubon'



Nymphaea 'Bancharak'

Feathered Friends

The Quack Shack

Duck & turtle pond build at exotic animal sanctuary

by Lisa Burns,
Backyard Getaway

When we started Backyard Getaway in 2004, we knew we wanted our business to be community minded. Giving back and helping local nonprofits was important to us. We held yearly pond tour fundraisers and hosted moonlight socials to benefit our favorite nonprofits.

During our third annual pond tour, we met the founders of Farmhouse Animal and Nature Sanctuary in Myakka City, Florida, a local wildlife farm and exotic animal sanctuary. They ended up contacting us to install a fountain on their natural pond.

We fell in love with what they were doing. Soon we were volunteering at the sanctuary on a regular basis. We even became live-in caretakers for two years while the founders were making plans to retire. Little did we know when we met them, we would end up taking in their animals 10 years later when they closed and starting our own 501(c)(3) nonprofit farm and exotic animal sanctuary.

A Holistic Habitat

Many of the animals at the sanctuary are here because of neglect, abuse or medical or age-related issues. We recognize the healing and relaxing





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Our sanctuary relies on donations, grants and income from our pond business to care for the animals and create habitats that are as close to nature for the animals as possible.

properties that moving water has not only for people, but also for the animals.

One of our goals for the sanctuary is to create a water feature of some type in each animal habitat. Our sanctuary relies on donations, grants and income from our pond business to care for the animals and create habitats that are as close to nature for the animals as possible. We are lucky, though, that our Backyard Getaway team volunteers their time to help with these projects.

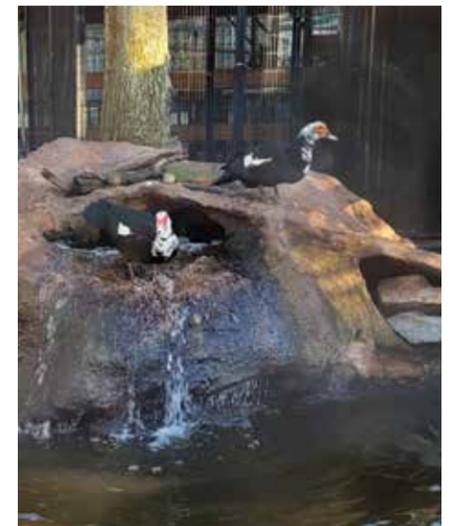
In addition, we work with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission's amnesty program. From time to time, we will be asked to take in animals that were confiscated or turned in to the program. Last year we were asked to take in a flock of orphaned Muscovy

and Mallard chicks. Both are considered nuisance animals in Florida and must be kept in an enclosure. We agreed to take them in and began planning the new habitat. Shortly thereafter, we were asked to take in seven confiscated red-eared slider turtles that are not native to Florida and must also be kept in an enclosed area. We decided this would be their home as well. Dave was excited to have an excuse to build a new pond on the property.

Pond with a Roof

We decided on an area that had an existing small runoff area and rain

The ducks are still enjoying their habitat (top, right) a year after it was completed. A female mallard (bottom) relaxes on top of the waterfall.



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garden filled with iris, taro and parrot's feather. The runoff area became part of the habitat, giving the ducks a place to dig bugs out of the natural-dirt bottom and some plants to munch on. Again, Muscovy and Mallards must be kept in an enclosure to keep them from mixing with native ducks and destroying native



Muscovy ducks enjoying the view from on top of their nesting box.

habitats. So with that in mind, we installed a 30-by-20-foot metal-framed enclosure that was 10 feet high. Per FWC regulations, we had to install a concrete border around the enclosure so the turtles couldn't dig out (and predators can't get in). The frame is covered with Knitwire material, which is super-strong but very lightweight.

Once the enclosure was completed, we got to work on the pond. Because the runoff-rain garden area is dry for half the year, we needed to add a pond that we could regulate. It had to be deep enough for the ducks to swim and dive in. The liner pond is approximately 12 by 15 feet and 3 feet deep and was placed next to the runoff-rain garden area and raised slightly higher so runoff would not fill the pond. We could have made the pond larger, but we wanted to keep a grass-covered area and a paver space for feeding. There is also a small "house" with a metal roof for them to get out of the weather.

The pond filtration system consists of a bottom drain that is



Connecting the knitwire panels together (top, left) for the roof. Installing the knitwire (top, right) covering.



plumbed through an Aqua UV Ultima II 4000 biofilter and an external self-priming 4,600-gph pump that feeds back to the pond through a bog waterfall. Although the pond is completely enclosed, we decided to add a skimmer house to collect the duck feathers. The skimmer houses a 2,400-gph pump that returns to the pond through an Aqua UV frog spitter with built-in UV

that we had on hand.

Duck, Duck, Turtle!

The next decision we needed to make was what type of rock to use to build the waterfall and pond edging. With 13 ducks, we knew that the rocks would be a covered in droppings. We needed something that would be easy to maintain.

Dave decided that creating a smooth, faux-rock waterfall with continuous edging would be the easiest for the volunteers to rinse and keep clean. The ledges around the perimeter of the pond were created with the edge dipping into the pond water in a few areas so the red-eared slider turtles could easily get out of the water to sunbathe. There are also small caves

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Exotic Animals' Home Away From Home

Farmhouse Animal & Nature Sanctuary, located in Myakka City, Florida, was founded by Dave and Lisa Burns in 2017. It is a 100% volunteer-run organization. There are currently 106 animals at the sanctuary, including kangaroos, wallaroos, ducks, chickens, rabbits, pigs, geese, horses, ponies, turtles, tortoises, donkeys, peacocks, sugar gliders, hedgehogs, bearded dragon, prairie dogs, many species of birds, guinea pigs, dogs and goats of all sizes.



Their mission is to care for, love and support the exotic and farm animals that live at the sanctuary for the remainder of their lives and to educate the public about animal care and nature. They are in the process of starting Hands, Hooves and Paws educational classes and one-on-one programs.

In January 2022, the sanctuary was named one of eight winners in the nationwide Tractor Supply Rescue Your Rescue contest, co-sponsored by Tractor Supply and Canidae Pet Foods. The award came with a \$25,000 cash prize, which is being used to replace the front gate and repair many sections of the facility's fencing in order to keep the animals safe. These timely repairs will also support their ongoing on-site education initiatives in the "outdoor classroom."

To learn more about the organization, visit www.farmhousesanctuary.org. Follow them on Facebook at facebook.com/farmhouseadventure and Instagram at instagram.com/farmhousesanctuary.



built in for the ducks to nest.

The waterfall was created as a bog, but we soon found out that ducks will eat every plant you put in the pond (and they like to swim in the bog, too). To the left of the waterfall, there is a sloped entry into the pond that replicates walking into a lake or natural pond, making it easier for the ducks and turtles to walk into the water. It is also an easy entry point for us to scrub the waterfall.

Wire mesh, rebar and wire ties were used to form the base for the rocks, caves, waterfall and edging. Unfortunately, the area was not accessible for a cement truck, and because we were only able to work on the pond during our free time, we used a portable cement mixer and mixed small batches of the faux-rock material, which was troweled over the wire mesh about 2 inches thick to create the basic form. A finish coat with colorant and sealant was then sprayed over the base coat.

The project turned out exactly how we wanted it to look and is very easy to hose off daily. The ducks and turtles seem very happy — and we never have a shortage of duck eggs! Our next water feature will be a grotto waterfall and lagoon in our kangaroo yard. *CS*

About the Author

Lisa Burns is the co-owner of Backyard Getaway, a pond and water garden service in Myakka City, Florida. Her interest in water gardening started over 20 years ago as a hobby that grew into a passion when Dave brought home a "pond kit." To learn more about the services offered by Backyard Getaway and our school habitat program, visit: www.backyardgetaway.net.



Landon Malave



Josiah Crousore



Joe Adams

APC Awards

The Bee's Knees of APCs

Kudos to these Atlantic/OASE professional contractors

by **Demi Fortuna**,
Atlantic/OASE

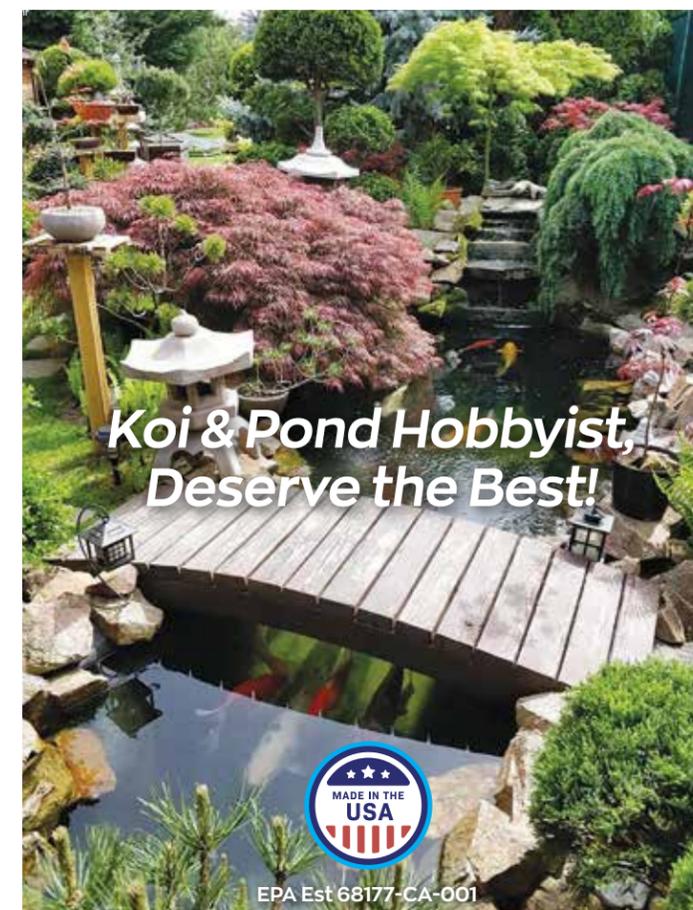
The 2021 Atlantic-OASE Professional Conference was held virtually Dec. 2, 2021, with more than 150 attendees via Zoom. At the end of the conference, the year's awards were given out to three noteworthy recipients.

APC of the Year

The Atlantic-OASE Professional Contractor (APC) of the Year is awarded to those who exemplify the finest attributes in our field: the creation of top-quality water features, a dedica-

tion to the industry and a helpful attitude toward fellow contractors. **Josiah Crousore** of Specialty Water Gardens and Landscapes of Columbia, Missouri, embodies everything we look for in an APC.

Since 2007, Specialty Water Gardens and Landscapes has offered the highest-quality ponds, waterfalls, fountains, landscape and waterscape design, installation and upkeep in the greater area. Recently, Crousore and his wife Anne added a pond supply retail location that they run together, and it has earned stellar reviews from their customers. In addition to an admirable and impres-



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sive body of work, Crousore is always sharing his knowledge with fellow contractors, making videos and tutorials with tips and techniques on building water features.

President's Award

This year's President's Award went to **Landon Malave** of LCM Landscape and Design. Malave always pushes the limits in his water-feature creations. With years of study and practice under his belt, he has trained to create some outrageous faux rock features, but he's equally at home with the natural rock that abounds in his Colorado stomping grounds. His video work is as exceptional as his innovative designs, sharing his work far and wide across the internet.

An avid family man, he is also currently training the next generation of innovative water feature artists — his two talented entrepreneurial daughters.

Monster Award

Finally, Lloyd Lightsey, the Pond Monster himself, presented the Monster Award, recognizing those who have gone above and beyond, who have given back to those around them, and who have made a difference in their community. Lightsey was the first recipient of the award, which was named after him for his and his wife Karrie's contributions in the fight against cancer. He presented this year's Monster Award posthumously to **Joe Adams** of the Pond Butler in recognition of his huge impact on the many who knew, respected and loved him. 

New for 2022: Starburst Mini Pond Fountain

EasyPro Pond Products has added the Starburst Mini Pond Fountain to their already impressive list of fountain products. It is powered by an energy-efficient, asynchronous mag-drive pump and features built-in, super bright LED lights for a burst of nighttime sparkle. The spray pattern is 2 ½ feet tall by 6 feet in diameter, making it perfect for smaller ponds!

To request your full-color catalog or for more information on EasyPro products, call 800/448-3873 or visit www.easypro.com.



POND Services Is Now 'Outdoor Network Services'

POND Services has offered pond professionals website and online-marketing services since 2014. In January 2022, POND Services announced their new brand, "Outdoor Network Services." The new brand is not all that has changed. Outdoor Network Services has upgraded their online marketing services to include SEM (paid advertising) and reputation management services in addition to their existing SEO (organic searches) services.

"By partnering with reputable online marketing companies, we are able to grow our services to offer all online marketing tools to the entire green industry" said Jeff Duggins, co-owner of Outdoor Network Services. "Our primary goal as a business has been and will continue to be to help local businesses get found by customers in local markets online."

"We combine graphic design, programming, and localized search engine optimization into every webpage we create. This ensures that the service and website pages we create get indexed by all the major search engines. Ultimately this ensures that consumers who are searching for services are finding the right business and are able to easily contact that business. Unlike other listing services and advisors out there, we allow the consumer to contact the contractor directly without the hassle of a third-party vendor getting in the way. Our set monthly fees ensure there are no financial surprises to the company at the end of the month. Their marketing is online 24-7."

Our synergistic approach to online marketing enables our websites to outrank your local competitors. By leveraging the local focus of each of our individual business listings across the country, we have developed a network of contractors and retailers that dominate their local markets and, in turn, help each other to gain credibility with all the major search engines.

Our goal is to help you grow your business through online search engine optimization services. We provide website design and development, directory service listing pages for your services in your local market and SEM services. Our goal with every client is to facilitate a long-term relationship and help you grow with your business. Your satisfaction is guaranteed.

Our team has years of experience in helping small businesses with website design, web development, graphic design and search engine optimization. We have developed and published hundreds of websites for the green industry, and our network websites help boost your search-engine ranking. Additionally, our team has real-life experience in the pond and outdoor-living contracting and maintenance fields. Therefore, our clients enjoy the unique combination of creative, technical and outdoor-living business know-how that our team offers."

Learn More at <https://outdoor-network.com>.



Outdoor Water Solutions Acquires Air-O-Lator

Outdoor Water Solutions, Inc. has acquired Air-O-Lator, a water and wastewater equipment manufacturing company in Kansas City, Missouri.

Founded in 2005, Outdoor Water Solutions is a pond and lake equipment manufacturing company in Springdale, Arkansas, that provides high-quality products to the industry. OWS is recognized for their broad and innovative product lines, including electric and solar bottom diffused aerators, display fountains, microbes, dyes, docks and more.

Founded in 1961, Air-O-Lator is a water and wastewater equipment manufacturing company recognized for their exceptionally high-quality products, including both display and aerating fountains, surface aerators, de-icers, aspirators, submersible mixers and more.

According to John Redd, President and CEO of Outdoor Water Solutions, "This new combined company will offer one of the broadest product lines available in the professional pond and lake industry. The brand Air-O-Lator is known for its high quality, dependability and ease of service."

Roy Watkins, formerly President of Air-O-Lator, will continue as general manager and operate the Kansas City location. According to Redd, "Roy's knowledge of their products and the industry is invaluable given his 42 years with Air-O-Lator. He has been instrumental in developing products known for their outstanding performance and dependability."

For more info about any of the combined company's products, contact Joe Forman at 479/ 231-1138 or email him at Joe@Airolator.com.



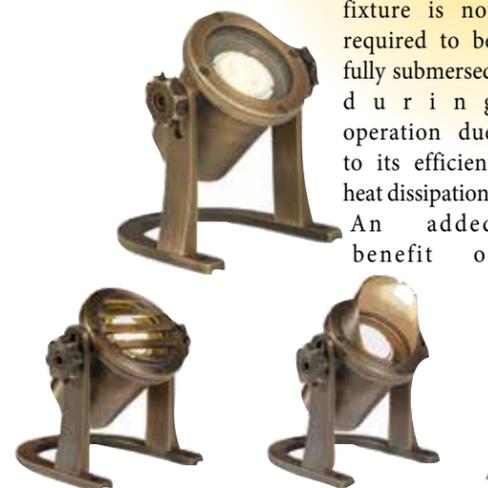
Enhance Water Features With Easy-to-Install Lighting

Waterscape lighting takes your water projects to the next level by highlighting ponds, natural swimming pools, fountains, streams and waterfalls. Lighting these key features can be difficult due to shallow water, limited space or the safety of your fish. The easy solution is AMP Lighting's new HydraPro MR11 Underwater Light.

The HydraPro MR11 Underwater Light has been redesigned and is now more compact than ever — ideal for applications where a low-profile submersible light is desired. Additionally, this

utilizing LED lighting, there is little to no heat emission, which is safe for fish and other organisms that are sensitive to heat within water features. The improved LED technology of the HydraPro MR11 Underwater Light provides powerful light output while maintaining efficient energy consumption.

Other key features of this product include cold-forged brass construction, which is better suited for water-related conditions. It also has a pressure-fit gasket that creates a tight seal, keeping water out of the internal housing. This innovative underwater light features an adjustable lamp housing that can move up and down, along with an adjustable lamp gimbal to allow for directional-precision aiming. Newly designed wire glands prevent water from getting into the fixture at one of the most common points of failure. Finally, the newly designed mount provides better underwater stability. Faceplate options include open-face, grated and shielded. The HydraPro MR11 Underwater Light has a hassle-free lifetime warranty. For more information, visit www.amplighting.com.



Zenshu Yasuyuki Fountain

The Zenshu Yasuyuki stone fountain makes a statement and adds interest to your landscape with its natural rough sides and flat polished surface surrounding three fountain plumes. Situated in the corner of a paver patio or flanking a grand entrance, the pooling water is a calm display of serenity that precludes the cascading of the element to the space below. The kit comes complete with the reservoir/basin and everything you need for professional install. Stand out by offering professional-grade fountains from Blue Thumb.

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2022 IWGS Symposium Scheduled for Aug. 24 - 28

The 2022 International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society (IWGS) Symposium is coming back as a live, in-person event from Aug. 24 - 28 in Naples, Florida. This is a special symposium, as we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the New Waterlily Competition. The three-day event features educational seminars, guided tours of the Naples Botanic Garden and visits to other Florida attractions.



Join us to network with fellow water garden enthusiasts at the at Naples Botanic Garden. You will have the opportunity to view the 2022 competition waterlilies and vote for the People's Choice Award. Registrations will open in March 2022.

Visit www.iwgs.org/symposium for more information as it becomes available.

Atlantic's Hammered Brass Bowls

Atlantic's beautiful new Hammered Brass Bowls complement any landscape, hardscape or poolscape with the timeless beauty of brass. In two sizes with a matching pedestal, the hand-hammered, solid brass bowls feature an attractive, acid-washed patina unique to each. Standpipes at the top of both overflowing and spillway styles create a bubbling-fountain effect and stabilize optional Atlantic Ring Lights for an illuminated torch effect after dark. The light cords pass invisibly through one of the dual 1 1/2-inch inlets using Atlantic's Cord Seal Fitting. Hammered Brass Bowls are designed to install on Atlantic Fountain Basins or Eco-Rise Systems quickly and easily to maximize your profit.

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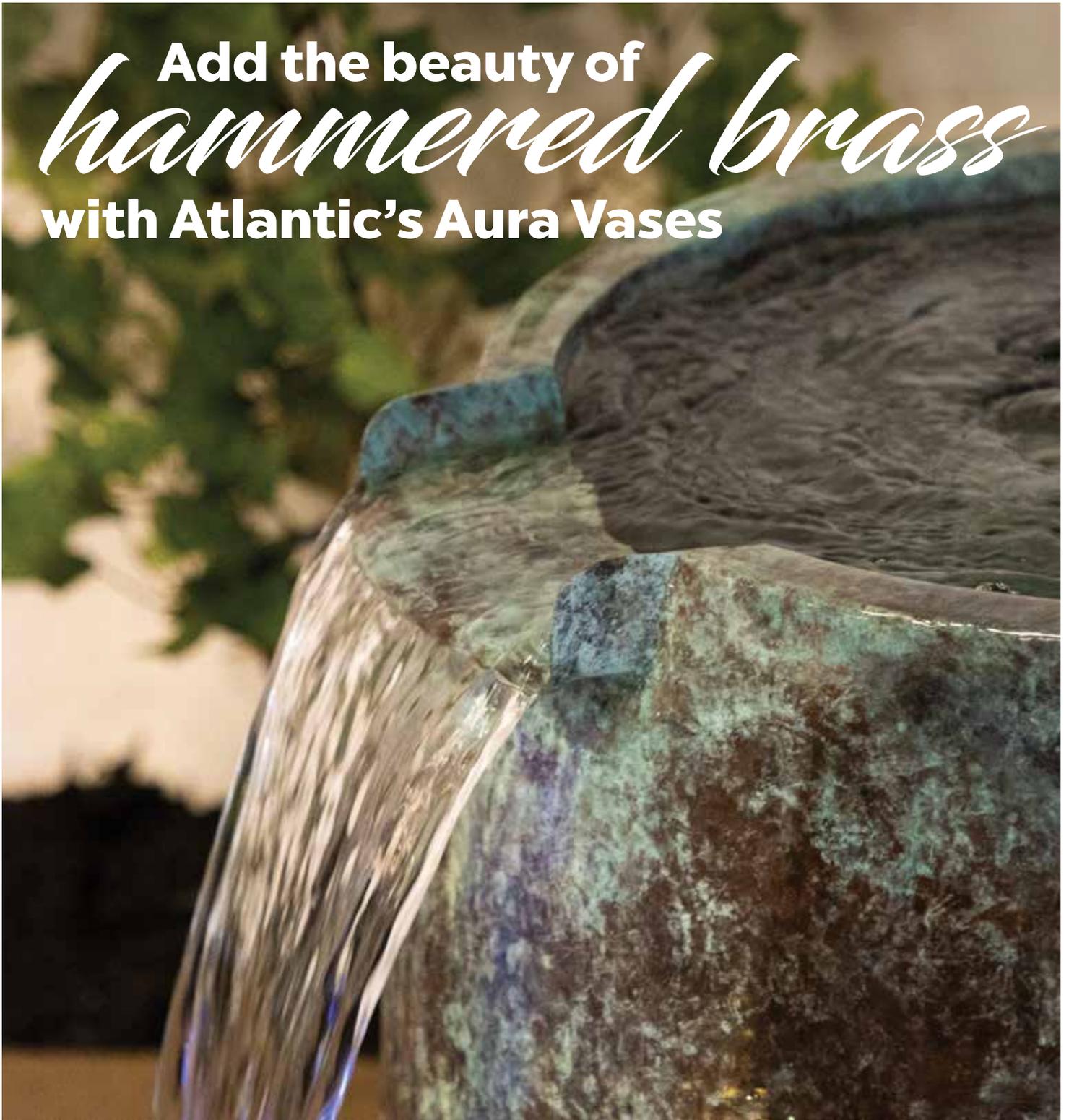
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