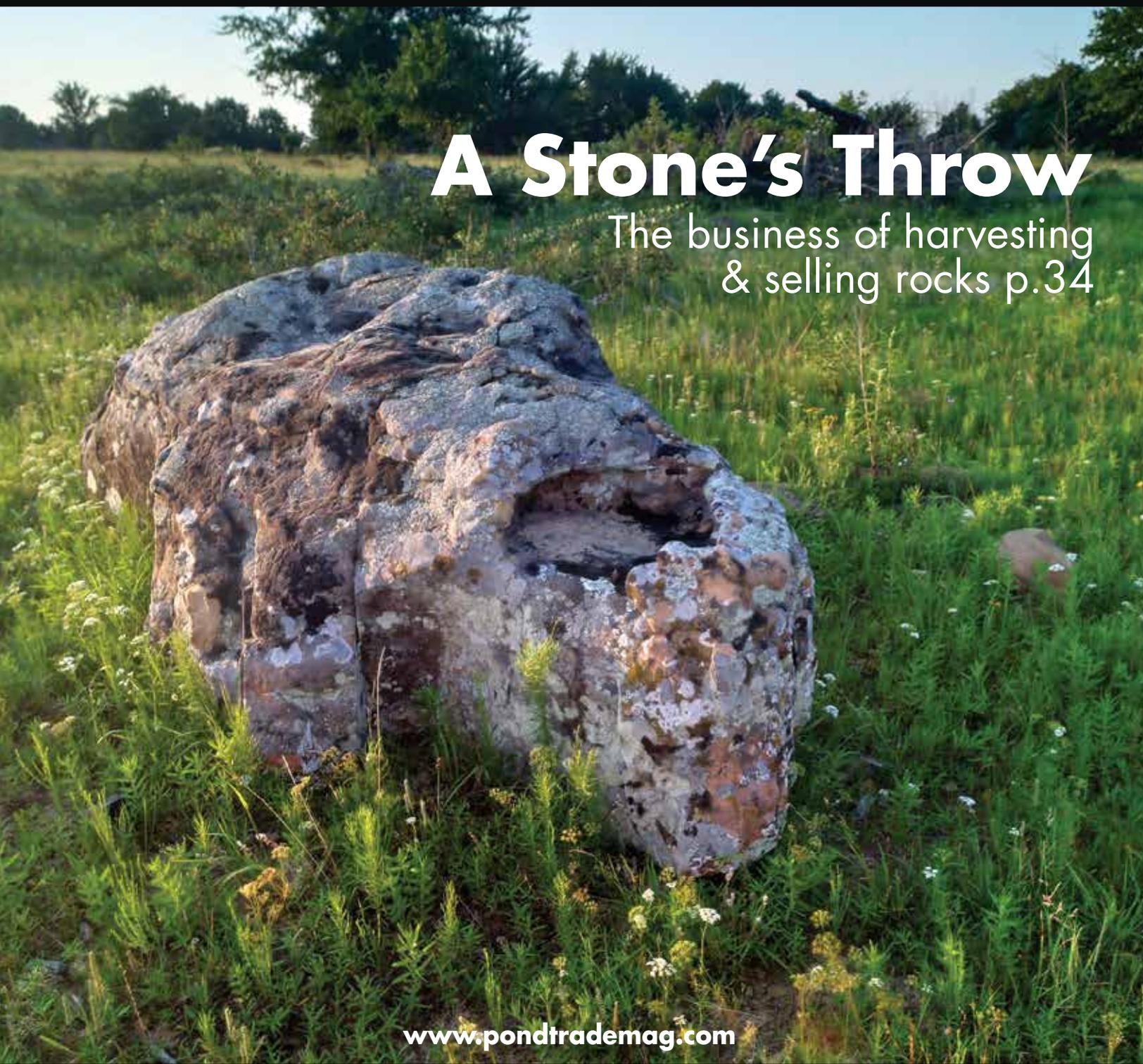


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## A Stone's Throw

The business of harvesting  
& selling rocks p.34

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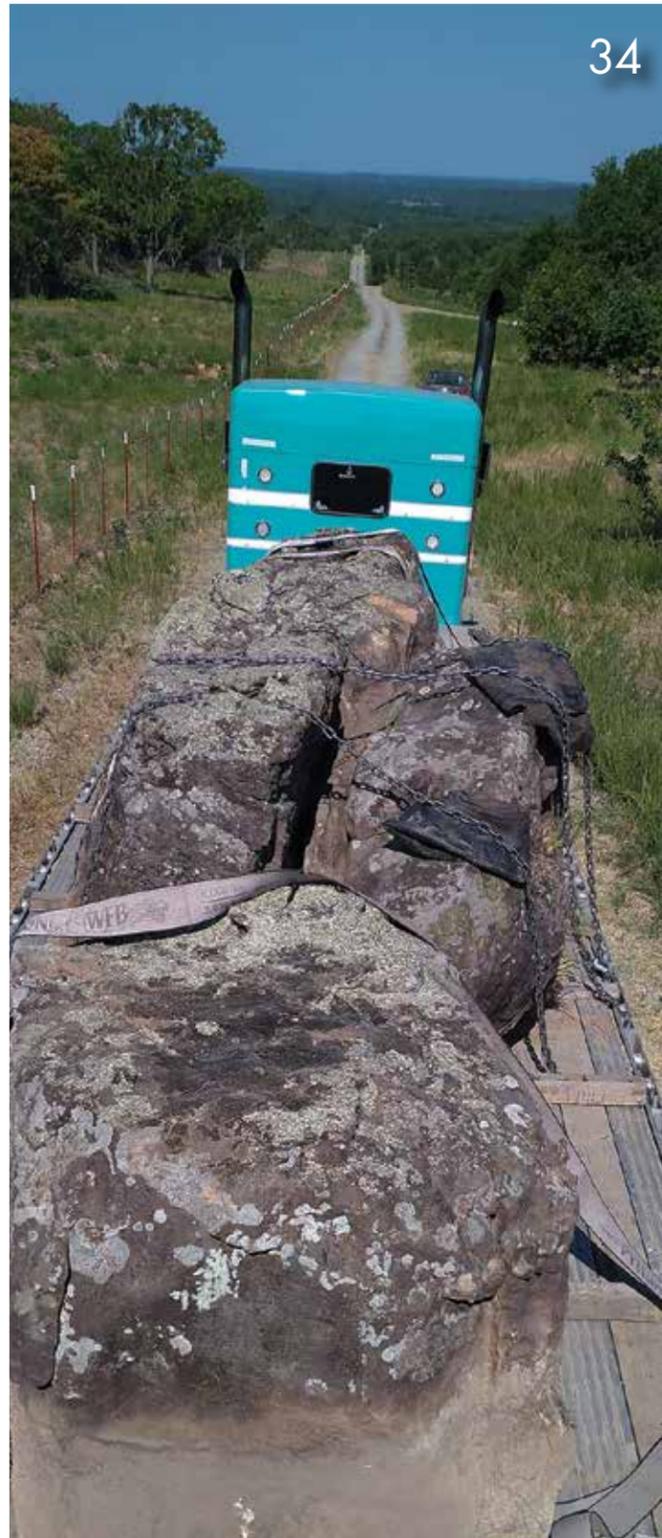
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- When we can expect change

What product to use and when  
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## Food Trucks



## FEATURES

### 8 A Boulder View POND CONSTRUCTION

**April Dugan**, a.k.a. "The Pond Girl," became the first female finalist in last year's Water Artisans of the Year contest. For this construction project, she takes us through her creative process and rock-placement strategy for a large-scale waterfall.

### 14 Pond's Higher Power

Building a water feature isn't always just a one-off business transaction, according to **Dean Pipito**. Waterscapes often take on a deeper, intangible meaning for your clients. Dean shares a handful of inspirational stories about how his company, Aquatica, has impacted people's lives.

### 23 Cream of the Carp LANGUAGE OF KOI

Lend us your ears! If you're a fan of unique koi varieties, check out **Taro Kodama's** "a-maize-ing" profile of 'Golden Corn' koi raised by the Tanaguchi Koi Farm in Japan. These brilliant yellow koi can change drastically over time, creating an element of surprise in the pond.

### 27 Walk on the Wild Side

Ostriches, tigers, urials — oh, my! For **Jake Bradley**, it's just another day at the office. Working with EasyPro Pond Products, Jake has taken part in quite a few high-profile pond builds for exotic animal habitats and shares some highlights and lessons learned over the years.

### 34 A Stone's Throw COVER STORY

**Shaun Lindley's** company will rock you — literally. Finding, unearthing, transporting, selling, palletizing and shipping stones and boulders of all various sizes and shapes directly to customer job sites from their location in Oklahoma represents his core business model.



### 42 At One With Nature

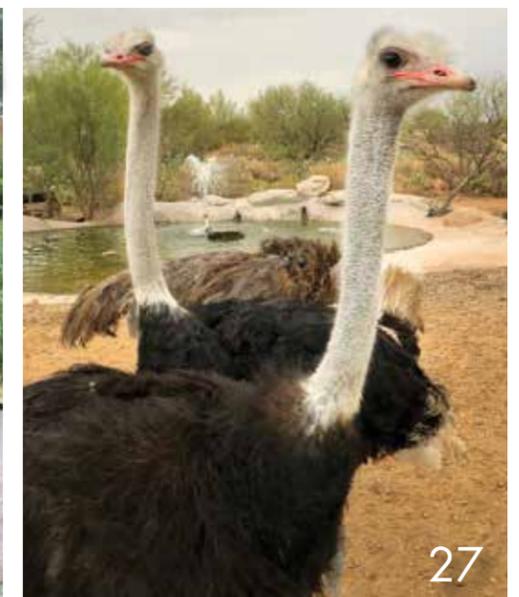
Aquatic ecosystems present countless opportunities for learning, **Alan Weene** argues. It is essential to understand humankind's innate interconnectedness with the surrounding natural environment to promote environmental education and create a living laboratory for experiential learning.

### 48 The Feature of All Features

**John Adams** has built a lot of ponds and water features in his day, but none quite like the one currently under construction at his home. His in-progress pièce de résistance features everything from a splash pad for his grandkids to an enchanting hidden grotto to woo his potential clients.

### 54 For Your Entertainment

Building an outdoor entertainment space with kitchen, television viewing area and formal koi pond is especially difficult with multiple contractors and personalities involved. **Kent Wallace** tells a story of two clients who did it just right.



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# Upcoming Events

2022

**September 16 - 18**

**Tri-State ZNA Koi Club Show**  
Hyatt Regency Long Island  
Hauppauge, New York  
www.tristatezna.com

**September 23 - 25**

**St. Louis Koi Show & Pond Expo**  
Timberwinds Nursery, Ellisville, Missouri  
www.gatewaykoiandpondclub.org  
www.nmzna.net

**October 19 - 20**

**Your Pond Farm Tradeshow**  
Barto, Pennsylvania  
www.yourpondfarm.com

**October 19 - 21**

**Hardscape North America**  
Kentucky Exposition Center  
Louisville, Kentucky  
www.hardscapena.com

**November 15 - 17**

**International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo**  
Las Vegas Convention Center  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
www.poolspapatio.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](mailto:llgelles@pondtrademag.com).

2023

**March 1 - 3**

**Water Garden Expo**  
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# Publisher's Perspective

## Connecting Along the Way

**Y**ou never know who you're going to meet when you're traveling. It's so fun to meet people at various pond events and connect with them. I've chatted with people at the Water Garden Expo, Pondemonium, Atlantic-OASE conferences, and regional koi shows around the country, and they often share a topic with me that they would like to write an article about for the magazine. It's one of the best parts of this gig!



Case in point, I recently connected with Shaun Lindley of Lindley Stone. Shaun and his wife Amy were my next-door boothmates at the Water Garden Expo this past March. He blew me away with his enthusiasm and knowledge of rocks. One thing led to another, and now one of this beautiful boulders is gracing the cover of this magazine. Please be sure to read his story about the business of excavating and selling stones. I think he rocked it!

As far as the rest of the issue is concerned, there is a powerful theme that overlaps several articles — the greater meaning behind building waterscapes and how it affects the lives of others. Dean Pipito compiled a touching collection of client stories ("Pond's Higher Power," pg. 14) that will inspire you to build for the greater good. Alan Weene also wrote a fascinating piece about the interconnectedness between human beings and aquatic environments ("At One With Nature," pg. 42). Thanks, Dean and Alan, for sharing your important perspectives with our readers.

On a less solemn note, I really got a kick out of Jake Bradley's stories about building water features for exotic animals like ostriches and tigers ("Walk on the Wild Side," pg. 27). You also won't want to miss Taro Kodama's Language of Koi feature about way-cool-looking Golden Corn koi ("Cream of the Carp," pg. 23).

So, the next time you see me out and about, please stop and chat! I'd love to hear what you'd like to read (or write) about for the magazine. You readers are truly the heart and soul of this publication!

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The view toward the main house from the wetland reveals boulders that create a walkway through the wetland.



# A Boulder View

'The Pond Girl' brings natural waterscape to life

## | Pond Construction |

**by April Dugan,**  
American Waterscapes

**T**here is a moment when a dry, dusty rock is struck by water and comes alive. It's this moment that I live for as a pond builder. Watching my clients' faces as they experience this phenomenon for the first time is beyond any monetary gain that could be had from any project.

### **Know Your Customer**

A pond construction project is a dream. (After all, no one actually needs a pond!) Getting to know the customers, their dreams and their intended uses of the pond is paramount to success. Are there children, dogs or those with disabilities who need to access the water? How does the family imagine using the space? What are the viewpoints and areas for access?

I love it when customers send me a picture that explains what they are looking for. One client sent me a picture of a family and a fire by a pond the day before the project started. The photo demonstrated the value this customer placed on the spaces where he and his family could interact with the pond together.

Only after we understand a homeowner's dream, we begin to think of the practical. What is the slope? What utilities and other obstacles are known to be there?

### **Design Process**

Then, I sketch. Everyone has a different process, but for me, getting the ideas together in a sketch helps me think through the potential challenges of the job and formulate a process for the build. I look for lines through the landscape as if it were a painting. If there is a natural slope, I want to tie into that. I want one rock to lead naturally to another like a chunk was just taken out from between the two by some great storm. I like to set nice big boulders on outside curves to really accentuate the shape of the pond and narrower stone to hug the inside corners.

Everyone sees and sets stone differently. I have had the opportunity to work with many people in the pond industry,

**I like the rock work to mimic the natural ledges we have in abundance around New England, so we make certain that the bottoms of the rock are buried or hidden by another rock.**



A swim pond excavation (top, left) nears completion. The stones (middle, left) in the pond are nearly set. Next up comes wetland excavation (bottom, left). A segment of the waterfall (top, right) looks from the home outward towards the wetland. Large threshold stone (bottom, right) was placed between the water and land.



Stepping outside the in-law suite feels like walking on the sky. Large slabs of weathered granite create a seamless transition from patio to pond.

and it is amazing how many different ways people can see a rock. I prefer to use a rock as it is, without building it up or spending a lot of time cutting it. I generally like them to be linear opposed to being set upright — although there is a time and place for all that, too.

I am known for my edge details, but to me, the best edges are planned at the beginning of the project so that they disappear into the pond and are rugged even in heavily used areas. I like the rock work to mimic the natural ledges we have in abundance around New England, so we make certain that the bottoms of the rock are buried or hidden by another rock.

When I'm finished sketching and visualizing the final product, I come up with a materials estimate and begin the job costing.

### Laying the Landscape

Our natural native New Hampshire waterfalls are generally ledge or very large boulders. Over time, these rock outcroppings are carved out of the mountains themselves. To mimic this the rock work under the water, we began the ledge for the waterfall at the bottom of the pond. We cut in shelves to build the stone outcropping over, and we placed the stone in such a way as to not have a traditional ring of stone around each level. Some stone came up two or more levels. We utilized more cobble and stone in the shelves to continue the look of a ledge. A few spaces were left with just a gravel mix across the shelf to leave room for aquatics.

By being efficient and utilizing the same excavation, plumbing and mechan-

ics systems for every pond, we gain valuable time to invest in the waterfalls and other interactive spaces. Unless it is just not possible, we start our excavation and level the grade around the entire pond or basin. This makes setting stone straightforward and leaves nothing to the imagination. It also helps us avoid low sections of edging that will need to be built back up at the end of a project. We generally work with 3 inches of freeboard, which is the space between the top of the water and the top edge of the pond liner. If we have lots of green pond builders working with us, we might increase that amount to 5 inches.

One of the best parts of a pond build is watching how people interact with the finished space, especially when they are drawn to use elements like sitting and stepping stones, islands and thresh-



**In areas where people will be interacting, feeding fish, crossing or accessing the water, I like to incorporate a threshold stone — a big, solid rock with a surface that is easy to walk on.**

install sod and some stunning terrestrial gardens that complemented the whole project superbly.

For this project, we had an exceptional group of highly talented artists. Each person on the team was selected for a particular skill set they brought that would complement the whole team. I am so grateful for each and every one of them.

When we step away from any project, we want it to look as though it's been there for many, many years — and be sturdy enough to be there for many more to come. ☞

### About the Author

**April Dugan** has been privileged for the last 20 years to build alongside some of the greatest pond builders of our time. She was the first female finalist in the 2021 Water Artisans of the Year contest. April has worked on three continents and in 18 states building ponds, waterfalls and rainwater-harvesting systems for private residences as well as commercial clients like the Lincoln Park Zoo, Shedd Aquarium, Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo, Iguanaland, St. Augustine Alligator Farm and the Virginia Zoo. The greatest joy of her life was building RainXchange drinking water systems for villages in third world countries with the Aquascape Foundation. To date, the organization has provided drinking water for some 70,000 people.



Acorus and cardinal flower (top) grace a bog pocket on the main pond construction. The barren soil (bottom) on the left will become the wetland. The right side of the pond is nearing completion!

olds the way they were intended. In areas where people will be interacting, feeding fish, crossing or accessing the water, I like to incorporate a threshold stone — a big, solid rock with a surface that is easy to walk on. On this project, two entire edges of the patio abutted the pond, making most of the pond highly interactive. We used six 10-foot stones that were flat and sloping into the edge of the water. It allowed for the edge to remain really low profile, incredibly accessible and stable.

In Japanese gardening, they often invite the larger landscape into the garden. I feel that this pond accomplishes that. By staying low profile, the

water very nearly touches the sky and mountain ranges beyond the project. On days when the wind is still, the reflective view is stunning. One can easily get lost in the beauty of the sky and water here.

### Icing on the Cake

The icing on the cake is always the aquatic plantings that blend terrestrial gardens into the water. In this pond we used lotus, lily, pickerel reed, marsh marigolds and water hyacinths, to name just a few. We are generous with the application of moss to our projects, which helps lend a sense of permanence. The homeowners were quick to

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Water can be a spiritual experience in the garden, as shown in this Mequon, Wisconsin backyard.



Dean's grandmother, Lee Kellermann, sits next to the pond with her dog, Sami.

# *Pond's Higher Power*

## Water gardening with deeper meaning

**By Dean Pipito,**  
Aquatica

I'm often asked why I got into this very tough business and how Aquatica has remained successful over two decades. I always smile and tell them, "Ponds are my purpose, my calling, my way of touching people's lives. It has not been easy, but I know that it has been worth it."

After you've been in the water feature and pond business for a long time, you start to develop perspective and appreciation for ways you can help people and touch their lives through water. Water gardening, ponds and water features can do just that — help people. Our latest slogan is, "You may not need a waterscape in these stressful times — or do you?"

I think the more our culture and society change and speed up, the more people need a way to reconnect with nature and slow down. Water features help us relax and regain a connection with ourselves, our families and a higher power. Ponds are a portal to something very, very special.

### **Water-Gardening Roots**

My journey started in my grandparents' backyard. I got a front-row seat to being raised by the Greatest Generation. My grandparents were very creative, outdoor-loving people. It's where my water-gardening roots came from. They bought me a pond kit from the local garden center, and we built our first pond in their garden. The memories made around that pond are forever etched into my memory. My grandpar-

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ents used to sit and listen to Milwaukee Brewers baseball games every summer night by the pond.

When I started Aquatica, my first project was to rebuild my grandparents' original pond. Over the years, that first pond became the center of our family. My relatives share in the love of ponds, and most have become pond owners themselves. My grandparents are special people. I have learned from them almost everything I know about rock work, landscape design and, most importantly, how to treat people. Their pond brought our family together at every gathering, and the neighborhood enjoyed it, too. I don't know many things that can accomplish all those things, even nowadays.

As Aquatica grew, so did my ability to help people through ponds. Early on, I became very aware that there was something extra-special about building ponds and connecting with people through what we do. It wasn't merely building a pond or water feature; it meant so much more than that. Whether it was an employee needing financial support, a client grieving a loved one or a friend going through a health crisis, we have always been there to bring comfort and ease to the weight of whatever they were dealing with. When we have our annual company meetings, one of the main things we review is the purpose of our company and why we do what we do.

Aquatica has countless stories of how a water feature can touch the lives of people in so many ways. We have built a long list of water gardens and ponds for senior living centers, hospitals, funeral homes, and university campuses with dedications and donors of loved ones who have passed. Their memories and souls can live on with the help and vision of a pond builder. Here are a few of those stories.

### In Memoriam

I will forever remember one of our first professional pond projects with Nancy and Dean H. They approached us to build a pond that could help them cope with the loss of their beloved daughter, who had died of lupus just



after her 19th birthday. She had always wanted a pond, but it never materialized.

In their sadness, Nancy and Dean wanted to create a memorial for their daughter, but they weren't quite sure what it should be. They wanted to express her love of life. They had seen an Aquatica display at one of our home shows and instantly knew what to do for the memorial. The pond became a way to remember their daughter and her beautiful soul.

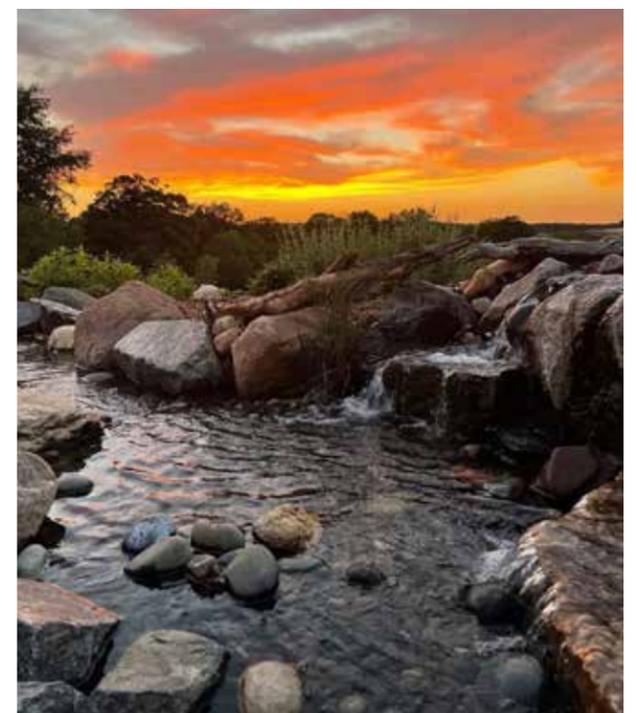
Today, her picture hangs to the right of the window so that people see her portrait and the pond at the same time from inside the house. Sadly, Dean also has since passed away. The pond maintains a constant source of comfort and joy for Nancy and her family and keeps their memories alive. I have become lifelong friends with her and treasure our strong connection, all because I had the honor and privilege to be a part of such a special project. I know that every time someone looks at

or enjoys the pond, Dean and his daughter are there with the family, too.

### I'm Lovin' It

We took part in another inspirational project at the Ronald McDonald House (RMH) Eastern Charities. This amazing facility is full of love and life for families and children going through cancer. It is a home away from home for so many people who need an extended family of people working on their behalf in their time of need.

Aquatica was approached by Ms. Ann, who was a lifelong volunteer and Master Gardener at RMH. She was a big fan of Aquatica and wanted to work with us for their renovation of the facility's Healing Garden. She expressed how important and instrumental this new water feature would be in bringing an oasis to guests and families in great need. I never imagined how impactful this would be for our company. The pond on site



Tom B.'s (top, left) Oak Creek Library Healing Garden is a sanctuary. Diane N. (top, right) enjoys the pond with her son Leo. The Wildlife in Need Center (middle, right) turtle pond project displays a memorial plaque. The magical power of a simple waterfall at sunset (bottom, right) is all but palpable.



A creek that sings is as relaxing as it gets in a hectic world.

was very old, dated and not functioning. In 2011, we renovated the pond into a beautiful pondless waterfall. It has now become a beacon for hope and healing.

The birds, dragonflies, frogs, and most importantly, people can enjoy this feature during their darkest times. To the RMH, this was an opportunity to breathe new life into a very tired landscape. The gardens have since been renovated around the pondless waterfall, and the Healing Garden is now the showpiece that is envied by other centers around the country.

Ms. Ann and I have become great friends over the years. She tells us stories of patients and families using the gardens to process their situation and how the waterfall and surrounding nature help them cope with what they are going through. Since 2011, Aquatica has donated 100% of our labor and resources to keep this feature shining and looking its best. We are there weekly to check on it, and we will keep doing this for as long as we are in business. It is a humbling feeling to be a part of something so compelling and meaningful.

### A Final Wish

In spring 2022, one of our longtime clients unexpectedly came into our store and shared her heartfelt gratitude for our help with her pondless waterfall the previous year.

Aquatica built a waterfall and pond feature for Penny and Mike H. many, many years ago; however, we hadn't serviced it for almost 20 years, as they were hands-on and enjoyed caring for the feature themselves. In early 2021, Penny called our service manager, Sean Gallaway, to see if we could get the waterfall running before her husband came home from the hospital. He was terminally ill, and she wanted him to see the waterfall one last time before he died. Sean and I discussed how we could get this accomplished, as we were literally booked for months and normally would not have been able to schedule this service call for weeks. We decided to immediately rearrange our entire schedule and went there the next day.

So, when Penny came into our store to thank us, she told us with tears in her eyes how happy the running waterfall had made Mike. He died two days after coming home from the hospital and spent his last hours listening to the waterfall running. Thank God we got his waterfall running before he passed. Something as little as that had made such a lasting impact in his final hours.

I will never take for granted such a small request, because you never know how much it can impact someone in need. A missed opportunity to make a difference can never be recovered.

### Love for Logan

A few years back, we were approached by a grieving family who had lost their 8-year-old boy, Logan, to myocarditis. He had been a healthy boy, but within three weeks of collapsing, he tragically passed away. It was devastating for his family.

His mother called us to build a memorial pond and waterfall for their family, because Logan had been an avid water lover. The family wanted his initials carved into the main waterfall stone and lit up at night. Graduation pictures, family gatherings and pond

hangouts have helped the family feel closer to Logan.

A family of immense faith, they took action and have since written a book, started a very successful charity called Love for Logan and served as a true example of selfless giving after such a tragedy. The pond is a standing tribute and reminder of Logan's time here on earth and a constant reminder of his love for water.

### Finding Meaning

So many people turn grief and loss into action. They are heroes among us. One of those heroes is Tom B., whom I met when he wanted to build a healing garden as a loving tribute to his late wife who had recently passed away. He had retired as the local fire chief and continues to be a huge part of his community. Tom had the insight to know what he wanted and felt that a healing garden at the new library and police station development was the perfect way to commemorate his wife and her love of gardening.

Aquatica designed an interactive pondless waterfall for young kids to enjoy and learn from. Adults can admire, listen, sit and read a book near the water.

The lively entryway feature happily greets all patrons as they walk into the library. It is incredibly inspiring to think of all the people who admire this feature daily and are impacted by Tom's vision and generosity. It never ceases to amaze me how people can take a sorrowful situation and turn it into such a meaningful experience for others.

### One Yellow Koi

Nine years ago, Diane and Tony N. came to Aquatica looking for a water feature for the front of their home, something they had always talked about building for their son, Leo, who was born with leukodystrophy.

"As our son's ability to be mobile decreased, we were looking for a way to bring the world to him," Diane told me. "We wanted to provide a place of serenity in a time when his body was experiencing immense pain. The soothing sound of the water flowing allowed him to find peace, often resulting in him drifting off into a deep slumber. The motion of fish captivated his attention and took attention away from his pain."

Through the years, Aquatica built multiple water features at Diane and Tony's for Leo to enjoy. From the first

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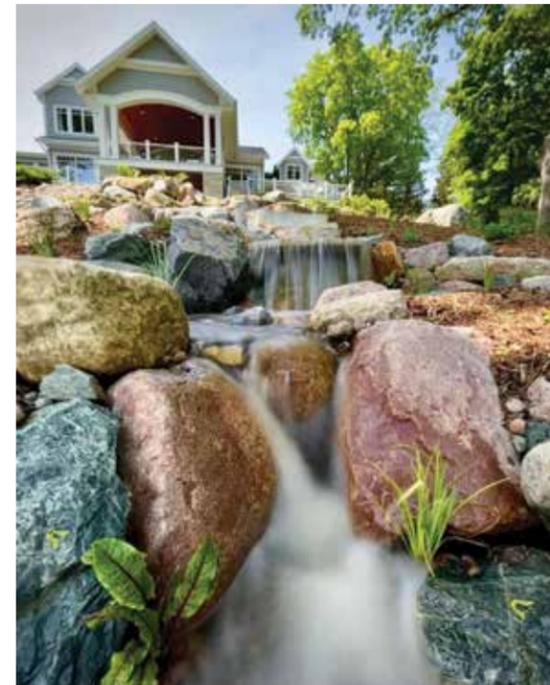
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A water feature (left) can be a powerful memorial. The healing garden (right) continues to inspire those at Milwaukee's Ronald McDonald House.

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Creating a scenic view from inside a home can be incredibly meaningful.

time we met, I knew he was special. It wasn't because of his disability or inability to do things most kids could do. It was his smile, his heart, his excitement for life and his ability to make others smile. Leo loved his ponds and had a blast being in charge during the builds. Whether it was telling the guys where to place his favorite rocks or making sure we were doing OK, he was always there to help. He loved his fish — especially the yellow koi. Leo would always make sure they had at least one or two in the pond.

Sadly, two years ago, we were informed that Leo had passed away shortly after Christmas. Today, the family has carried on their son's legacy by making sure that there is at least one yellow koi in the pond. Diane and Tony's projects were more than just jobs; they have become like family to us at Aquatica. We were a partnership to bring the dream of a child to life — his love for water, fish and rocks all together in one place.

### A Boy's Treasure

Another particularly special client will forever be in our hearts. (In fact, "client" is an unfair description of a family we consider dear friends.)

This family introduced us to their son

more than 15 years ago during a visit to design a pondless waterfall. The boy had some extreme physical challenges and was also nonverbal. The amazing love the entire family had for him was clear from the first time we met. The objective for installing the water feature was to provide joy and relaxation for this little boy.

The boy would spend hours out of his wheelchair lying alongside the waterfall and stream, smiling and relaxing. The family told us over the years how impactful and meaningful the waterfall had become. After a long battle with physical challenges, we were recently sadly informed that the boy had passed away. The nearby lake and this water feature were the boy's two favorite places in the world — it's even etched on his headstone.

We are so grateful for having been even a small part of this little boy's journey and a source of comfort. We are still in contact and remain good friends with the family. They continue to remind us of how important this water feature was to them and their boy.

### Sights & Sounds

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a gut-wrenching illness. It is horrific. I

write this with tears in my eyes.

Aquatica was approached by a husband who wanted to comfort his dying wife with something she could look at from her bedroom window. She loved nature, water and fish. He knew that as her disease took over her body, all she would have left would be her functions of sight and sound. He wanted her to be able to continue to view the pond from her bed, so we designed the pond and waterfalls in such a way that she could get the maximum sound and the best view. The entire bedroom was remodeled with a larger picture window and layout to accommodate her view of the pond. The pond was the last thing she saw on this earth!

People gravitate toward water in times of grieving, love and life. Water features can be the perfect memorial and bright source of comfort in an otherwise hectic world.

Never take for granted the higher power of a pond. ☞

### About the Author



**Dean Pipito**, owner of Aquatica, has been in the pond industry for almost 30 years. He and his staff have built one of the largest pond and waterscape firms in the country over the last two decades. Aquatica continues to appear in Aquascape's Top 5 / Top 10 businesses since 2001 and is a Master Certified Aquascape Contractor since 2002. Dean is former president and long-time board member of the Wisconsin Landscape Contractors Association and a former board member of the Wildlife in Need Center of Wisconsin.



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This gorgeous Kanoko has scales of golden corn. Check out how she looked when she was 1 year old on pg. 24.

# Cream of the Carp

## Golden Corn koi variety debuts in Japan

by Taro Kodama,  
Kodama Koi Farm

Ever so many years, thanks to breeders' efforts, we enjoy encountering new varieties. Most of the time, however, they are a metallic, Ginrin or Doitsu version of existing varieties. I believe only few can be called a completely new variety. Golden Corn, which I am going to introduce here, is one of the few new varieties.

It has been about five years since Mr. Taniguchi from Taniguchi Koi Farm first introduced Golden Corn to the industry. Many of you might have heard the name, but you probably are not sure what it is.

Golden Corn is a very hard variety to define because it can develop into so many different

variations. (You will see what I mean when you look at the examples in this article.) Some may look like Ginrin Kanoko Karashi or even Asagi. One strong characteristic of this variety is that koi develop a Kanoko (polka dots) pattern as they grow big and mature.

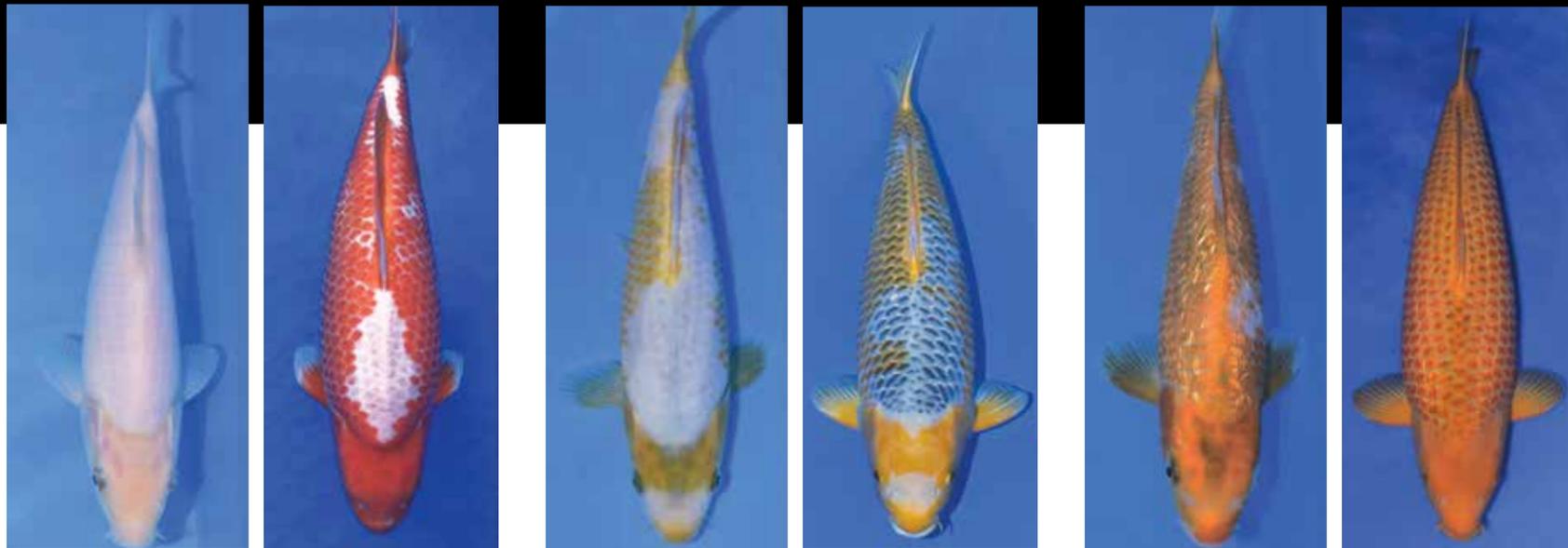
In 2021, I interviewed Taniguchi from Taniguchi Koi Farm. I would like to share what I learned about this variety.

### Origin of Golden Corn

Taniguchi had worked on the Golden Corn variety since 2005, and he stabilized it in 2017. This means he had a solid pair of koi parents that could constantly produce the variety.

He wondered how he could reproduce this interesting Kanoko pattern on koi.

This koi was bred from a pair of female



Here is another surprising change. You can not even recognize that this Tosai 6-inch koi (left) is the same koi as the 4-year-old, 35-inch koi (right).

This version has the stronger blood of Asagi. When it was Tosai (left), it did not have much Amime or indigo netting on its 8-inch body, which is characteristic of Asagi. But at 4 years old (right), you can see the Amime clearly on its 29-inch body.

You never would have imagined that this koi would turn out to be so gorgeous. Drastic change and growth are typical of this variety.

Chagoi and male Ginrin Asagi. The Chagoi was more than 40 inches long. Taniguchi loves Ginrin varieties, so at first, he wanted to breed koi with Ginrin. From the pair, one interesting koi was born. She looked like Ginrin Soragoi or Ginrin Asagi that had an interesting Kanoko pattern.

She became the inspiration. Taniguchi envisioned creating beautiful koi with Kanoko patterns. He crossed her with a male Asagi. From the pair, he got Ginrin Asagi. What was different from regular Asagi was the beni at the bottom. There were a lot of small Kanoko that appeared to come up to the top. He crossed her with a male Karashi.

But this was no ordinary Karashi. Karashi was born from a pair of female Benigo and male Karashi. Because he had the stronger blood of Benigo, its offspring tend to develop many red dots. As koi, these red spots ruin the beauty of the yellow body of Karashi. They were not even sellable.

However, he wondered if that feature might help realize his vision — koi with beautiful Kanoko. His intuition was right. That was the last piece of the puzzle to develop Golden Corn.

### Surprising Features

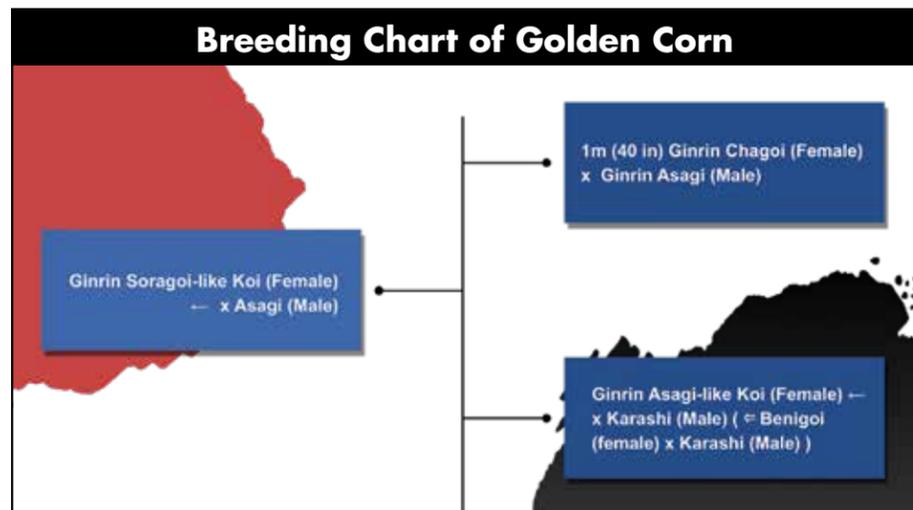
Because they have the blood of Chagoi and Karashi, Golden Corn koi have the DNA to grow big. You can feed them as much as you want and enjoy the jumbo growth.

Another feature is the drastic change of pattern. Kanoko patterns usually emerge as koi mature. Some koi may not even be recognizable from how they looked when they were babies. So even if they look boring or you think they have no future, you should hold on to them. "You will be surprised," Taniguchi insists.

I do not know if this is what he

expected when he started his journey 17 years ago. Maybe it was like walking in the dark, but he certainly created such an amazing variety.

Remembering that all koi started from food carp, what a challenging and time-consuming path our senior breeders in Japan have taken! When you consider all their accomplishments, they have now created more than 100 different varieties in koi. I respect Taniguchi with the challenge and the accomplishment. Moreover, I would like to thank all the breeders in the past and present for working so hard to create these living



jewels for our enjoyment.

They are many more versions of Golden Corn than what you see in this article. If you would like to get Golden Corn from the Taniguchi Koi Farm, please contact a koi dealer who imports Japanese koi. Golden Corn koi may look ugly when you receive them, but as you can see above, you should do not give up. Take care of them for at least three years in your pond. Good luck! ☘

### About the Author

**Taro Kodama** is the president of Kodama Koi Farm, the largest importer and distributor of quality Japanese koi in the United States. With locations in Japan, Hawaii, New York and New Jersey, Kodama Koi Farm carries more than 35,000 Japanese koi from the top breeders in Japan. Taro, along with his father Mamoru, not only provide show-winning koi, but they also conduct many koi seminars.



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## | Exotic Habitats |



Redneck & Black Cape ostriches at Arizona Aquatic Gardens

## Walk on the **WILD** Side

Water feature construction for exotic animal habitats

by **Jake Bradley,**  
 EasyPro Pond Products

Every time I am contacted for help on a project that involves an animal exhibit — bears, moose, ostriches, big cats, alligators — I get a bit excited. It's probably the kid inside me who grew up in the country trying to catch any critter I could get my hands on.

(Who knew porcupines could climb trees?) My parents also thought hybrid wolves would make good pets — which I 100% don't recommend when kids are involved. But I digress.

Along with this excitement comes the adventure of the unknown. Forging into new waters seems to bring with it a set of unique challenges that can't always be anticipated and will inevitably need to be overcome.



Time for a drink (left) at the Roosevelt Zoo Tiger Pond. Snow Urials, (right) congregate at the Arizona Aquatic Gardens.

To set the stage, one of my roles at EasyPro is to help our customers find the best solutions to accomplish the goals of whatever project they have in front of them. In the case of exotic animals, starting with lots of questions seems to be the best strategy. All the same

general principles of normal water features apply: We want good water quality whether the feature is going to be used by a fish or a bear. However, it can be so easy to miss the obvious when you are presented with something completely new. Here are a few examples.

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## Ostriches

They have feathers and can be mean. Seems obvious, right?

For example, take one of my experiences with Peter from Arizona Aquatic Gardens. Peter's day job is supplying the freshwater aquarium world with some great fish and water treatments, and while we only play a small part in that, Peter also has a ranch full of exotic animals — no small accomplishment!

Peter and his family have implemented nationally recognized conservation and breeding programs for some animals that I am not even quite sure how to pronounce. He has been kind enough to share pictures of a few of his world-class habitats, including his ostrich enclosure. The main event in this habitat is, of course, the ostriches, but in the background is a simple concrete pond with a fountain.

The fountain was down, and Peter needed a submersible pump to get it back up and running as soon as possible. We quickly shipped him one of our top-selling pumps, and all was well until a few weeks later when Peter called to inform me that the pump had quit again. He told me how dangerous of a job it can be to venture into the enclosure with the aggressive birds to service the pump.

We shipped Peter a new pump right

## NUTS & BOLTS: THE EQUIPMENT

### Ostrich Pond (azgardens.com)

- Pump – TH400
- Screen – SPS12

### Roosevelt Zoo (rpzoo.com)

- Skimmers – PS2FB with SETS Extension Tubes
- Pumps – TM17500
- Filters – PCF120 Cartridge Filters
- UV Lights – 3-inch, 400-watt Aqua UV Vipers
- Water Treatments – SRB80 Sludge Remover
- Liner Protection – Porous Pave

away to swap with the failed pump in one undertaking, rather than Peter having to risk a swift kick from an angry Jurassic Park-sized bird at two different entrances into the enclosure. Once the failed pump arrived back at our warehouse for inspection, I felt equal parts relieved that the pump was actually fine, and embarrassed that I hadn't thought of giant bird feathers plugging up the pump from the very beginning. Based on what we dug out of the pump's impeller during our inspection, we realized that some simple pre-screening was all that was

needed here to make Peter's life much easier. (Needless to say, a new question to ask has been added to my checklist when it comes to enclosures with large birds.)

## Tigers

Another success story I was able to take part in was the tiger exhibit at the Roosevelt Park Zoo in Minot, North Dakota. I don't think I'll forget Irv Geffre from Alta Falls, a long-time distributor based in Minnesota, calling me and saying something to the effect of, "I've got a really neat project that's wide open for whatever we want. It's going to have tigers in it and a couple of lined ponds for them to swim in."

My list of questions for this one got long quickly, but the primary goals were straightforward: Protect the pond's liner and equipment from some pretty wicked claws. Give the cats clean water to drink from and play in. Provide a feature that was simple and safe for the zoo's maintenance crew to maintain. Provide an aesthetically pleasing feature to catch the eye of the zoo's many visitors.

But of course, goal No. 1 was to protect the liner, because what good is a pond that doesn't hold water? For this, all the credit goes to Irv. His plan of installing Porous Pave over the liner has proven to be an extremely effective,



Overhead view of the Tiger Ponds at Roosevelt Zoo.

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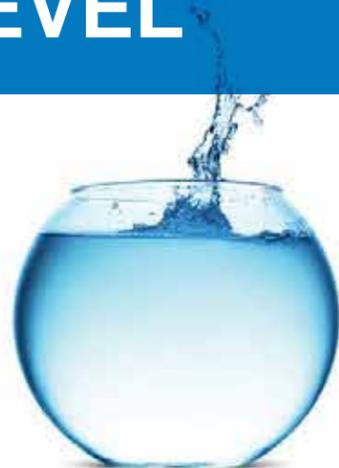
Listened to a diaphragm pump lately? In contrast, linear-piston LA aerators have about as much ambient noise as a light ballast.

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Redneck & Black Cape ostriches (left) at Arizona Aquatic Gardens. An East African Crowned Crane (right) enjoys its new digs at Arizona Aquatic Gardens.

paw-friendly solution. The zoo was more than willing to give it a try, and everyone involved couldn't be happier with the results.

Goal No. 2, keeping the water clean, was accomplished with two skid-mounted filtration systems that include cartridge filters and 400-watt commercial UV lights. We chose cartridge filters because they are simple to maintain, and without fish or plants, the biological needs of the ponds are low. The UV lights provided a safe alternative to chlorine, yielding clear water that is safe for the cats to drink and does not affect the EPDM liners.

To help with keeping the zoo's maintenance staff safe, these skid systems are tucked away in (and crammed into) a nearby building to protect the filtration systems and the zoo's staff from the curious cats. This location was critical in keeping the zoo's staff and the cats in their respective areas.

If you haven't gathered it already, the Roosevelt Park Zoo has been a great partner in this project during the plan-

ning and construction, and more importantly, the maintenance of the feature. This project was full of out-of-the-box solutions, and while credit can't go to just one person, Irv's creative solutions really helped hit this one out of the park!

**Into the Wild**

If someone were to ask me what I see that makes exotic animal projects successful and why they are worth the extra effort, I think it starts with someone being willing to step outside their comfort zone and have perseverance. I have seen customers bring this to the table time and time again, and in almost every instance, they get to walk away with a really neat addition to their portfolio or private escape.

I end up with a whole new category of customers and some cool stories to tell. For my part, I feel blessed to be able to contribute my small piece helping folks do what they do best, while getting a chance to remember what it was like to have my bedroom pillow become a wolf's habitat. I think I'm going to have to get that pillow back... ☺

**About the Author**

**Jake Bradley** grew up in rural Michigan learning to appreciate nature from an early age. He worked in landscaping as well in his family's business before finding new challenges at EasyPro in 2006. Jake works in the EasyPro sales team as the Project Coordinator and among other things, is responsible for analyzing landscape plans and blueprints to determine project needs and what equipment and features will give the best possible results for landscape contractors, pond builders, and their customers. If Jake looks familiar, that's because you've likely seen him in the EasyPro booth at trade shows. In his spare time, Jake enjoys boating and spending time with his wife and two children.





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My wife's prize boulder she envisions in the waterfall at her dream home.



## | Cover Story |

By **Shaun Lindley,**

Lindley Stone

No stone is exactly the same, and each customer envisions its use differently. That's what makes my job as a stone harvester and supplier so interesting — knowing where a rock or boulder came from and how it was used to create something beautiful and natural looking for others to enjoy! Hopefully sharing my perspective on excavating and shipping will help designers and contractors more clearly communicate their needs with their stone supplier.

### **A Rocky Start**

I grew up on a 5,000-acre cattle ranch in southeast Oklahoma where, from the age of 5, I started operating tractors and picking up rock to build fence posts, create creek crossings and improve pastureland and hayfields. At age 11, I was operating bulldozers building farm ponds under my grandfather's instruction. I graduated college with a degree in agribusiness but spent several years wrestling steers in professional rodeo.

In 1995, while traveling through Paris, Texas, I noticed a landscape company that had fieldstone for sale and built small water features. The idea was born — we had lots of rocks at home! This company was my first customer. I then added other water garden contractors to my client list in Oklahoma City and North Texas.

We harvest the majority of the rock off our ranch, but luckily there is a surplus of landowners willing to let us buy theirs. We pay landowners a royalty per ton and also try to improve their property as we excavate rock. While most of the rock in southeast

# A Stone's Throw

The business of harvesting & selling rocks



Oklahoma is similar, they can vary in hardness, density and natural shape literally within a few hundred feet of each other.

Growing up in this region gives me a good idea of what type of boulders will be on a property and where. Also, looking at old stone structures and rock corner posts can tell you what rocks are abundant in that area. I do spend many hours hiking property looking for the best quality boulders. Once I find them, there is the challenge of transporting them to a staging area to palletize and ship them. We live in an area rich in natural gas, so luckily there are lease roads and well locations that can be used.

### Solid Selections

Today, we excavate a large variety of sandstone boulders in many shapes and sizes. I take pride in my customer service and work one-on-one to make sure customers get what they need to make their vision a reality. We market boulders ranging from hand size, which are used in flowerbeds, streams and fill-in material in waterfalls, up to bigger boulders that act as a focal point or a major structural member in larger projects. No matter the size of boulder excavated from its natural location, which took thousands of years to form, when handled and installed properly, it can give a project

that same natural look.

Our decorative boulders have lichen and moss with lots of character and grooves from years of wear from the

**Our moss boulders can be placed so they appear to come straight out of the hillside, making them perfect for recreational pond construction and landscaping projects anywhere.**

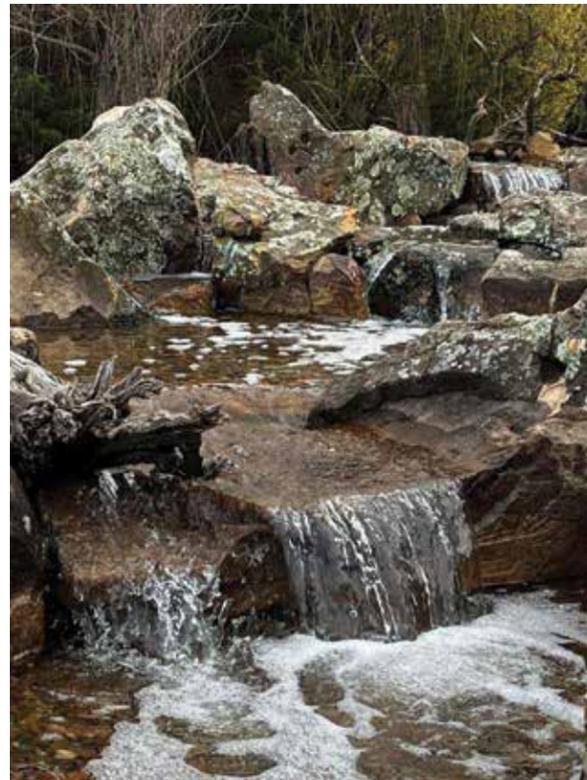
environment, which adds natural beauty to a project. The beauty and natural look of moss boulders gives projects a timeless look as if they were created naturally over the years.

We offer all types of stone, but moss boulders remain our specialty. Our moss boulders can be placed so they appear to come straight out of the hillside, making them perfect for recreational pond construction and landscaping projects anywhere. Sometimes they even have small trees and grass still growing from the crevices and covered in moss and lichen, giving it a true, natural look. We have even had contractors come hand pick stone still unearthed. We carefully excavated, palletized and shipped it directly to their job site.

For unearthing, transporting and loading, nothing beats the efficiency and durability of a skid loader (top, left). To minimize damage during loading (middle, left), we use lifting straps and a 48k-lb. excavator on large boulders. This gnarly mossy boulder (bottom left) is available from Lindley Stone. We excavated this 8,000-lb. weathered boulder (right), and it is just gorgeous.



Boulders in nature (top) are just waiting to be unearthed. Some of completed water features (bottom, left and right) are shown using our company's stone. They were designed and installed by Nature's Image Aquatic Design in Topeka, Kansas.



**Correct boulder selection and placement makes a world of difference in how natural everything ties together. I've seen designs that used my boulders that flowed so well it made you feel like you had stumbled onto a natural oasis.**

We like to do dimensional boulders in blocks and beams for stacking in retaining walls and water features. Large, flat boulders work great for steps, natural stairways, grotto slabs and waterfall spill rocks.

We also do a lot of custom orders where contractors give me the dimensions of the boulders they need. Sometimes it's a computer-aided design. Sometimes it's a specific list with exact measurements; other times it's required quantities. Often, it's a verbal description. The challenge here is that at 130 to 160 pounds per cubic foot, rock is heavy. Sometimes the size they want ends up weighing more than they can manage with unloading and placing. If they require massive height on a project, we look for taller rocks with less depth. If they are stacking, we look for blockier material.

### Bo(u)lder Designs

Correct boulder selection and placement makes a world of difference in how natural everything ties together. I've seen designs that used my boulders that flowed so well it made you feel like you had stumbled onto a natural oasis. In other projects, I ended up being embarrassed to say I'd supplied them!

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Last year, we shipped a 22,000-pound boulder that stood on its side to create a shear face for a waterfall. This was one of the largest boulders we'd ever shipped, and it took an articulated loader for loading and unloading. We've excavated stone from different places in Oklahoma to match projects with material native to that area. Recently we started working on a project using large boulders in the 8 to 10,000-pound range that had to be excavated

and loaded with a 48,000-pound machine and set with a crane. In the end, most projects demand a variety of shapes and sizes to give it a true natural look.

Natural beauty with no maintenance and a onetime purchase provides a lifetime of landscape beauty. Use care in excavating and shipping along with clear communication to know your customer's needs. This tends to benefit in increased popularity with both old and new customers alike. 

### About the Author

**Shaun Lindley** got into the stone supply business in 1995, picking up rocks off his family ranch in McAlester, Oklahoma. In 1997, he opened a retail yard in North Texas and sold it a few years later to focus on moss boulders. Since then, Lindley Stone has gone on to emerge as one of the America's top suppliers of moss boulders.

Shaun is married to his best friend, with whom he shares a passion for rock. They are working together to expand their company. [www.lindleystone.net](http://www.lindleystone.net)



### Ancient Buried Treasures

Most people associate Oklahoma with popular tribes like the Cheyenne or Comanche. However, lesser-known tribes date back thousands of years to prehistoric cultures. During the Dalton Period (8500 – 7900 BC), southeast Oklahoma was inhabited by woodland tribes that hunted and gathered for food. Archaeological dig sites point to a large amount of local lithic (stone) resources used for tools, including those of plant processing.

Between 1,200 and 550 years ago was known as the Agricultural Villager culture. These villages of hunters, farmers and traders were located near non-flooding fertile land. That's where we find the artifacts — along creeks and higher on a ridge. Some are smaller, but others are worn into solid stone formations.

Recently I found a large boulder too big to move with seven bowls (three bigger ones and four small ones). These bowls were used to grind corn, acorns and other nuts with another hand-size stone (also known as a mortar and pestle). Arrowhead hunting is a popular pastime here as well.

Special thanks to the Oklahoma Historical Society and Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Archeologist and Culture Center for providing this information.



These are some Native American artifacts that we've come across over the years, including grinding bowls and larger processing rocks unearthed near a native campsite and graves.



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Countless educational opportunities are lying just below the surface. Spend a few minutes digging around the edge of a pond, and who knows what you might find!

# At One With **Nature**

## Aquatic ecosystems advance experiential learning

by **Alan Weene,**  
Reflections Water Gardens

**T**hanks to millions of years of the evolution of our species, humans are innately drawn to aquatic environments. Every major civilization this world has ever seen has relied on water for sustenance, agriculture, protection, transportation, economics and the survival of its people. Our pre-human australopithecine ancestors were aquaphiles, too — evolving from, living in, hunting and gathering near, drinking from and bathing in natural bodies of water.

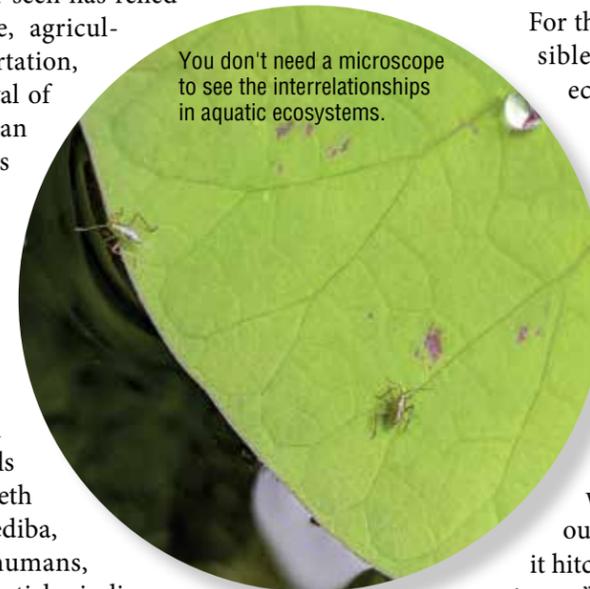
Historian Erin Wayman's research on the preserved dental fossils of two-million-year-old teeth from *Australopithecus sediba*, a possible ancestor of humans, revealed botanical food particles indicating that the species consumed water-loving grasses and sedges. Human civilization has always been and will forever be entwined and interwoven with water and natural environments.

Water features within our built environment (e.g., waterfalls, beaches, ponds, lakes, streams and fountains) inspire us to connect with the natural systems that exist in the landscape, revealing the complex relationships and interconnectedness that we share with all living things. This recreational and curiosity-driven engagement with water leads to a high level of experiential learning.

### **Need for the Natural**

The concept that interconnectedness exists between

humans and nature was popularized by E.O. Wilson's biophilia hypothesis in the 1980s. He proposed that humans inherently seek connections with nature. A fundamental problem, however, is that in the vast majority of traditional academic settings students are not being provided with practical opportunities to engage with and learn from natural systems.



You don't need a microscope to see the interrelationships in aquatic ecosystems.

For the most part, we are responsible for having created an ecologically illiterate society — a self-inflicted disconnect that is deeply rooted in a lack of understanding of living systems and our place in the web of life. Living systems are, by definition, synergistic, and made whole by an amalgamation of parts. Scottish-American naturalist John Muir once wrote, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."

Thinking systematically requires new ways of organizing our communities, problem-solving, teaching and learning. It also requires us to reimagine our definition of the classroom. As designers and builders of aquatic environments, it is not only our professional responsibility to create sanctuaries for relaxation, enjoyment, peace, and tranquility for our clients; it is also our responsibility to create living laboratories for place-based learning and spontaneous interaction with nature.

In 1984, Harvard University biologist and naturalist Edward O. Wilson originated the term biophilia to describe the instinctive bond shared between humans, nature and the other living organisms that inhabit this planet. He explains that humans are genetically

imprinted with a bias toward natural settings because our species spent the majority of its evolutionary history completely immersed in and exposed to nature, and therefore humans inherently seek ecological relationships with the living and nonliving components of their local place, both as a means of survival and acquiring habitat-specific knowledge.

American-Chinese geographer Yi-Fu Tuan was among the first to adopt the concept of topophilia, which is defined as a strong sense of place — not necessarily a love or an affinity for a certain place, but a deeply rooted connection with the landscape and a genetic proclivity to form cognitive and emotionally sentimental connections with places, specifically with natural aquatic environments.

Just as mother-infant bonding might be considered a socially adaptive response to increase the likelihood of offspring survival (e.g., enhanced nutritional values, protection, behavioral development, cognition, etc.), place bonding with aquatic ecosystems may

have instilled certain survival advantages by creating a better understanding of environmental resources, ecological relationships, and natural systems.

In her book “Harvesting One Hundredfold: Key Concepts and Case Studies in Environmental Education,” Donella Meadows teaches us that over the course of history, native civilizations have had a deeply refined perception of their environments and the natural systems within while holding profound respect and reverence for those systems. In native cultures, environmental education was intrinsically tied to carefully teaching the principles of survival from generation to generation.

### Longstanding Bond

Humankind’s relationship with nature has changed dramatically over time. As western and developed civilizations evolved, so too did the perception of our natural environment.

During the Age of Enlightenment, René Descartes advanced the philoso-

phy of dualism — that human minds and bodies are two distinct and separate entities capable of existing and functioning independently of one another. With this philosophy came the idea that humans were separate from nature rather than a part of a whole system. Environmental education was no longer a tradition for survival; instead, it was seen as a mechanism either for extracting consumable resources from the or for studying nature for the purpose of cataloguing natural wonders and to satisfy our curiosity of things we didn’t fully understand. In these early urbanized cultures, nature was thought of as being subservient to humans.

In Peter H. Kahn’s book “Developmental Psychology and the Biophilia Hypothesis: Children’s Affiliation with Nature,” he states that by most evolutionary accounts we are genetically predisposed to live and learn as humans did two million years ago in the savannas of East Africa, drawn to seasonally available water sources and surrounded by open grasslands. “Thus,



Ponds can be sanctuaries (left) for relaxation, enjoyment and spontaneous interaction with nature. What do humans and frogs (right) have in common? They are both inherently drawn to water.

attention and positive feelings are given to vegetation and natural features such as stones and water,” he writes. “Bodies of water also drew forth other animals and plant life on which humans depended.”

Evolutionary theorists Orians and Heerwagen suggest that present-day people are generally biased toward these savanna-like environments. This is reflected and can be observed in the elements that compose our urban centers and built environments — for example, parks, ponds, beaches and other publicly accessible green space. In order to secure a more sustainable future for our offspring we need to “recondition” ourselves to embrace a new way of thinking about education, place-based learning and developing biophilic relationships with living systems, much like our ancestors and their offspring did when place bonding with savanna-like aquatic environments.

### Place-Based Education

Place-based education connects learning to communities and the world around us. According to the website Getting Smart, the term refers to anytime,

anywhere learning that leverages the power of place — not just the power of technology — to personalize learning.

The tenets of topophilia suggest that, historically, metaphysical connections with place have been notably linked with culture-based learning. We can therefore conclude that humankind’s inherent attraction to natural environments necessitates access to non-human, natural settings.

So, what might this look like in practice? The delivery system for improving ecological literacy in students might include an aquatic-based environmental learning approach, marrying access to ponds, lakes, rain gardens or wetland areas, with activities and curricula that encourage spontaneous interaction with freshwater ecosystems, inspire curiosity, enhance our perception of humanity’s place within the web of life and instill participants with a better understanding of living systems.

In his influential work “Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder,” Richard Louv explains that an environment-based education movement “at all levels

of education will help students realize that school isn’t supposed to be a polite form of incarceration, but a portal to the wider world.”

Learning from nature — and particularly learning from aquatic ecosystems — is perhaps the best way for students to bond with their place of learning because, as we learned from Yi-Fu Tuan, the experience of being near a body of water echoes the cultural-based education acquired by our early hominid ancestors.

### Re-imagining the Classroom

The traditional dictionary definition of a classroom is a room, as in a school or college, in which classes are held.” However, many dictionaries include a second definition of a classroom, describing it as “any place where one learns or gains experience.”

By this definition, emotional and social intelligence can be cultivated in any learning environment, indoors or outdoors, conventional or contemporary, classical or peripheral; but based on what we’ve learned about topophilia and place-based experiential learn-

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ing, the learning experience is potentially far more impactful when students are exposed to the outdoors and engaged by natural surroundings.

Extensive research shows that the influence of environment-based experiences leads to increased engagement, better attitudes toward learning, improved retention of knowledge and a higher level of cognition and academic performance among students.

For example, Marc G. Berman and his colleagues at the University of Michigan evaluated the effect of a scenic walk on the cognitive performance and attention of participants in a controlled test group. In the first of two studies, the participants were asked to repeat random numbers given to them by the experimenter, but in reverse order. Each participant was then given the task of taking a 50-minute walk in either downtown Ann Arbor or the university's arboretum. Attention and cognition was assessed again when they returned from their walks. The experiment was repeated the following week, except participants who originally walked downtown now walked in the arboretum and vice versa. After careful analysis, it was discovered that the participants who walked in the arboretum demonstrated a 20% increase in attention, but no significant gains were found in the participants who walked through the busy urban downtown area. "Taken together, these experiments demonstrate the restorative value of nature as a vehicle to improve cognitive functioning," Berman wrote.

## Ecological Literacy

A pond-based experiential learning process may assist in creating a new paradigm for ecological literacy by reinforcing the connectedness of humans and natural aquatic systems. By being a part of the experience, students can begin to understand that they are integral parts of the web of life, that they



A constructed wetland is an instrument for environmental education and a living laboratory for experiential learning.

are participants and not simply outliers or observers and that the complex interrelationships of natural systems are both omnipresent and ubiquitous. In doing so they are also empowered to think systematically and to bring these concepts home to their families and communities. Observing frogs, catching tadpoles and crayfish, chasing dragonflies, watching raindrops bead and roll off lotus leaves and learning from the natural systems in and around a pond may be the key to ecological literacy and environmental stewardship within the home, neighborhoods and community. Simply put, ponds present opportunities for our clients to participate in place-based experiential learning in ways that traditional indoor classrooms cannot.

Landscapes that include ponds and water features transform the visual, auditory and spatial qualities of the surrounding space. They evoke feelings of peace, calm, relaxation, restoration and tranquility. For these reasons, the resulting attraction to the ponds and water features we create for our clients may do much more than simply

satisfy their emotional, cognitive and physiological needs to gather, relax, and recharge; our aquatic creations may also be instruments for environmental education, delivering a multidisciplinary educational experience that creates lifelong biophilic and topophilic connections to the place where learning occurs.

Just imagine an interactive outdoor laboratory where children can learn the principles and disciplines of microbiology, hydrology, botany, plant physiology, chemistry, limnology, biomimicry, ecosystem services, regenerative design, art, language, ecology and physical education (to name a few), all driven and enabled by our inherent physiological disposition to be near a body of water.

Guess what? You just imagined a pond! We are more than just pond tradespeople; we are agents of ecological literacy, and the ponds we create are our champions. ☘

## 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.



The feature as it sits today (top, left) patiently waits for John to finish the swim pond. His design layout (bottom, left) shows the finished pond, grotto and fire boulder. His concept for “Grotto Falls” (right) details how it ties into the rest of the feature.

## | Personal Space |

# The Feature of all Features

‘The Oasis’ hosts next-level personal waterscape build

by **John Adams,**  
Modern Design Aquascaping

As a professional pond builder for more than 25 years, I have built my own personal water feature multitudes of times. Going through life as an artist, my skill sets and vision have continued to evolve with the passing of each year. Eventually this evolution, combined

with my addiction to creating, would entice me to inevitably decide that my “old” feature was in need of an update.

After chasing my tail for all these years, I finally decided to design the feature of all features, once and for all — just be done with it!

I am officially changing the name of our home to “The Oasis.” I’m choosing to share this with you even before its completion, because I am not going

to tear out, modify or change this feature. I have incorporated every cool thing I have seen or done over the last 20 years into this design, and it’s crazy exciting! It might be a 10-year project with multiple phases, but we are making big strides, and things are looking amazing out here.

At some point, I dreamed up the concept of this comprehensive living experience, incorporating every great idea I have ever commandeered from all my artist friends. I always say that I build things out of natural stone and wood, so this theme would have to play throughout our entire home, inside and out.

This new water feature was dubbed “The Watering Hole” by a friend of mine because it signifies a place where all animals gather — and that is No. 1 on my list! My plan is to create the place where everyone wants to go. I want to build a place where friends and family plan to visit, a place that generates a feeling of joy and an energy that makes you smile inside and out. A place for kids to swim and explore. A place for adults to relax and connect. A place to eat, pass time and chill! We have spared neither money nor time, and I am excited to tell (and show) you where we are in the process, and where we are going!

### Initial Design

The initial design was for a water feature that completely surrounded two sides of our home. The front porch was intended to be a splash pad for the grandkids. Creating the infrastructure for this 700-square-foot space was step one. The splash pad captures rain from one quarter of our roof, in addition to its own footprint, and holds 3,500 gallons of rainwater below the ground. Water flows up through multiple core-drilled boulders that are sunken into our patio, and it then magically disappears back into the ground. The kids love it, and they have no problem spending the entire day in this one spot!

Even though the pond and the splash pad won’t technically be connected, the splash pad will transition right into the edge of the swim pond, creating a seamless flow from one to the next. The swim pond will span the remainder of the length of the house, finally spilling over a 6-foot-tall waterfall, which will conceal a hidden grotto behind it. This waterfall will create a secret cave and will crash down into the top of a smaller lower pond.

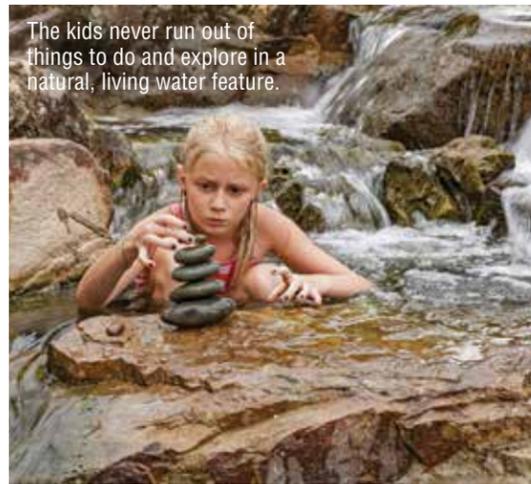
The lower pond is actually our filter system.



The current view (top) looks out the front window to the swim pond. Currently the wetland (middle) is running at 100% — this shot is pre-grotto. A computer sketch shows the “after” shot goal (bottom) looking out the front window.



The lower waterfall is a great place to relax by the fire fountain.



The kids never run out of things to do and explore in a natural, living water feature.

Hiding underneath this pond is a massive up-flow wetland (biological) filter that is currently keeping our water pristine. The water in the wetland now makes a sharp 90-degree turn, developing into an elaborate series of falls and pools that wrap around the second side of the house. At the end of these last falls, the water disappears out of view into a sub-grade, 10,000-gallon, rainwater-capturing reservoir. (It

is noteworthy to mention that this area collects and stores another quarter of our roof's rain.)

### Highlights & Details

At the time of writing this article, we are currently about 70% complete with the overall job. We started out with a total overhaul of the front of the house. Vinyl siding was traded in for a weath-

ered-limestone veneer with basalt-stone accents. We also added copper-colored down spouts, "Harry Potter style" light fixtures and some built-in basalt-stone bar tables as some extra-special touches. We then had to build a huge block wall to hold back the pond, since we are building right up to our property line. We have already scheduled a limestone wrap for that wall to match the new stone house.



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The swim pond will be about 20 feet wide, 24 feet long and 6 feet deep. There are some really cool things going on in this area, starting with the Missouri limestone, which will be used in all the stone in our feature that can be seen from this upper pond and splash pad area. We love the look of this rock, and from a business standpoint, we can show clients the difference in stone types to help them decide what's right for their project.

We also brought the water right up against our house foundation. This took a lot of work, not to mention an engineer, to create a way to "veneer" some gray flagstone slabs right up against the outside of the house. The goal here is to look out the living room windows at the fish. There will be no boulder transition between the house and the water — you will simply open the window to feed the fish (in the 6-foot-deep section of the pond). I tell my grandkids I did this so that when they get too crazy I can toss them from the window into the pond!

The swim pond will have several short, simple, elegant waterfalls, as we are focusing on fish and deep water for swimming up top. In order to maintain proper circulation up top, we allocated 50% of the pond's flow to underwater jets. There will even be a fire boulder built into the edge of the pond for some added evening ambiance.

### Waterfall Madness

Looking from above, water from the pond will disappear from sight over a negative edge opposite the splash pad. This is where we will make the clean transition from Missouri limestone above to the native Tennessee mountain stone boulders below. This waterfall will also create the falls that conceal the hidden grotto. Looking from the lower area, you will see this massive waterfall dropping down from the pond above.

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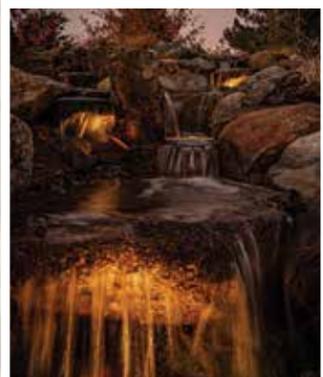
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Friends and family find their way to The Oasis more and more these days, and we can't wait to see the completion of our magical space!

We plan to integrate a concrete vault into the creation of the grotto area. This cave behind the waterfall be an awesome place for the kids to play and explore. The grotto water crashes down into the top of our wetland filter, which is now fully operational. It was fun to design the wetland in the middle of the project, since wetland filtration is typically designed at the headwaters of a swim pond. Due to our limited space, we needed to use 100% of the upper area for swimming, so we had to mix up our design a bit.

Today, the feature is running at its full flow rate of 30,000 gallons per hour. Everything from the wetland filter down is running, and the surrounding landscaping is almost complete. Large, mature specimen plantings were utilized to get some instant gratification. We installed color-changing LEDs in the water feature, and the landscape lighting is ready to go in. The irrigation is installed, and every time I see it fire up it makes me smile.

We are almost there! Stone patios and accent boulders are being installed as I write, and there's smoke coming from the barbecue! All we have left to complete are the grotto falls, the swim pond and the integration of the pond to the splash pad. It sounds easy if you say it fast! ☺

### About the Author



#### Modern Design

#### Aquascaping Inc.

has been building ponds and waterfalls all over the world for more than 20 years. They are located in Friendsville, Tennessee, and are a family-owned and operated business. Check them out on YouTube, where they create content to inspire and educate the world on water features.

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The final pond shape is determined and formed.

## Best Practices

# For Your Entertainment

Outdoor living area puts formal koi pond on display

by **Kent Wallace,**  
Living Water Solutions

A few months ago, I was browsing a local pond and water garden site and answered a question asked by a woman named Sheila. She got back to me and asked if I could help with their new pond, which was part of a backyard makeover. Sheila and her husband Kelly wanted a formal raised pond that would be located at the east end of a new patio. A patio cover was to start halfway over the pond and extend west over the new patio. This was to be an outdoor entertainment area complete with a kitchen, television and seating area.

### Coping with Challenges

Before I became involved with this pond project, the company that was hired to build the outdoor kitchen suggested they build the same type of metal frame assembly for the koi pond. I was asked to help with the pond layout by creating a 3D SketchUp

model they could work with. After several changes, it was determined by the project manager, Dave Case of American Precision Construction, that building the frame out of steel and covering it with cement board was just too complicated and expensive. The next option was to form and pour the walls out of concrete, which is the direction we went.

Another design issue we had to deal with was the two poles for the patio cover on the east end over the pond. One pole could be easily placed behind the upper bog and waterfall box, but the other pole was in the way due to the size and shape of the pond Sheila wanted. For no apparent reason, the patio cover contractor proved very difficult to work with when it came to placement and shape of the footing for that pole, so the decision was made to place the 6-inch square pole in the pond. It protrudes up through a plant shelf we designed into one corner of the pond's end. The interior of the pond shell was to be coated with polyurea, making it easily doable.

The fish were temporarily placed in a small quarantine tank. A month after starting the design

phase, it collapsed. I supplied them with another larger Polytank, and they were able to save their babies.

### Design Specifics

The pond's shape is a series of rectangles softened with a couple of 45-degree angles. One angle is the transition from the lower section to the middle section on the edge of the entertainment space. The other angle is in the corner where the pole comes up through the inside of the pond. With the pond at 4 feet of depth, this shelf was at ground level, so it clears the footing for the pole.

This corner is a two-tiered shelf that acts as the steps for egress. This end of the pond has a 3-inch LWS aerated bottom drain with a 5-inch diffuser



We set filters on a pad behind the bog.

and an Aqua-niche floating skimmer. Water travels from the 3-inch bottom drain to a 55-gallon drum radial separator behind the upper bog box with a Wlim Wave 1 1/6 Horsepower pump pulling from both the radial separator and the skimmer. Water will travel from the pump to two 55-gallon drum biofilters and back to the pond. The upflow sand and gravel filter will house a 3-inch down-flow UV light with a bleed port to prevent air buildup in the UV chamber. The other biofilter is an up-flow Air Driven Dilution Reactor with chunks of Matala as media and a 60-lpm Medo air pump to power it. Water from the ADDR will flow through a 3-inch line into the base of the upper plant bog with the sand and gravel filter feeding four 1 1/2-inch returns. Two of the returns are near the pond floor at the base of the wall under the spills from the plant bog. The other two returns are at the far end, with

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Shown above are the upper plant bog drain and return plumbing (top); the final bracing and support around the post and shelf (second); the prepped surface (third) and the finished polyurea ready for tile (bottom).

one at the base of the plant shelf and the other on the shelf to promote good circulation through the plants.

In-pond aeration is from two 5-inch diffusers on a timer. One five-inch diffuser is on the bottom drain dome, and the other is a 5-inch diffuser cup in the center of the floor area. This second diffuser is in the middle section of the pond to help keep the floor circulated. A 40-lpm Medo air pump on a timer with a valved manifold supplies the air to these two diffusers.

Valving multiple air discs with a manifold is important because any fluid will follow the path of least resistance. A valved manifold gives you the ability to restrict the air supply to the discs or stones with the most flow, which balances the flow equally between the two air discs. You will always have one valve wide open, because that will be the air line with the most restriction. The key to making an effective air manifold is finding small enough valves. Finding standard valves smaller than 1/2 inch is easy, but they are usually much more expensive. I've had the best success using CPVC valves, because these 1/2-inch valves have a slightly smaller inside diameter, making the air adjustment easier. Using standard 1/2 or 3/4-inch valves makes the manifold hard to adjust, because the hole size is so large that you must close them way down to effect any change.

The upper bog box has a support plate about 4 inches off the floor, just the same as an up-flow sand and gravel filter. This allows for a more even

distribution of water throughout the bog and makes draining and cleaning easier through the 2-inch bottom drain, leaving it unrestricted. The support plate assembly is made of heavy-duty plastic shelving cut to fit. Just above the plate and under the first layer of large rock is an air-cleaning manifold to blow the rock and gravel clean, allowing the bog to be drained from an upper rinse drain.

### Finishing Touches

Once the forms for the shell were removed, the interior surfaces were cleaned and parged with BondKote to prepare the surface for the polyurea. Paul Parszik of Artisan Aquatics was hired to apply the polyurea coating. The raised outside surface of the pond is covered with black tile, while the bog box is covered in a lighter-colored ledge stone. A 1-inch angle aluminum step was sealed in the polyurea to allow a starting point to set the stone on the inside of the front face of the bog and on the face under the spills leading from the bog to the pond. The top cap sections are custom-poured concrete according to Sheila's dimensions.

It was nice to work with a client who knows what they want and has a specific vision. It's also great when that client can see a construction issue and deal with it accordingly. There were other issues not related to the pond that came up, and watching Sheila and Kelly deal with those in a constructive and cooperative manner makes me wish all my clients had that ability! 

### About the Author

**Kent Wallace** was born and raised in Las Vegas. Kent spent most of his adult life in the automobile industry at independent shops and dealerships, including his own shop as a race car fabricator at age 24. Then, in 2001 a neighbor asked Kent if he could build her a koi pond like the one Kent's father had. From that point on, pond building became his new passion. That first pond he built was submitted to Better Homes & Gardens magazine and won Best Courtyard Nationwide in their special interest publication.

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## Trade News

### Brian Helfrich Joins Atlantis Water Gardens to Build Fire Prevention Pond

Brian Helfrich, vice president of construction at Aquascape Inc. in St. Charles, Illinois, is partnering with Jaak Harju of Atlantis Water Gardens in Denville, New Jersey, to design and construct an innovative, sustainable fire prevention pond for Matt Pfister, a resident of Yucaipa, California. Pfister has endured two close calls from local wildfires over the past five years, each conflagration coming within a couple hundred yards of his mountaintop home overlooking Los Angeles, the most recent being July 2021.

Helfrich is combining his expertise with Pfister's longtime experience with drainage and pipelaying to install a sustainable pond that will hold 130,000 gallons of water, and consists of 600 tons of rock, all of which Pfister is excavating from his own property. The pond will be designed such that water will be drawn from the bottom of the pond to a pumphouse, which then can be distributed to fire hydrants around his property to irrigate the area and combat fires. With Helfrich and Atlantis Water Garden's assistance, this unique fire

prevention pond concept also will serve as a large recreation pond – one that will be able to accommodate wildlife survival, aquatic entertainment for Pfister's 16 grandchildren – and community events.

"The project will serve many functions for the community," Helfrich said. "First and foremost, it will be a safeguard to help prevent spread of future wildfires in the immediate area through its inventive pumping system. And then it will also be essentially an aquatic attraction for people near and far. The pond and property will be used for weddings, church and youth group activities, and more. Jaak [Harju] and I were able to help Pfister create a pond with this unprecedented combination of characteristics and capabilities."

The first phase of the project was done in December 2021, in which the foundation of the pond was placed with liner, rock and plumbing pipe. The pond is currently in its second phase of construction, placing additional stone and filling the pond. The project forecasts to be completed by summer 2022.



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**Water Artisans of the Year Contest is Open for Entries!**

POND Trade magazine is pleased to announce that its sixth annual contest is open for submissions as of Sep. 1, 2022.

We had a record number of entries with last year's categories, so we're featuring the same categories with one small change. The Best Under \$15k category is changing to Best Under \$20k. (Thanks, inflation!)

- Most Naturalistic
- Best Under \$20k
- Formal Ponds and Fountains
- Pondless Feature
- Rock Artisan



For the official rules and entry form, go to <https://bit.ly/2022artisans/>

**Water Garden Expo Announces 2023 Dates and New Venue**

Pondliner.com is excited to announce that the Water Garden Expo will be held on March 1-3, 2023, in Shawnee, Oklahoma. The 2023 WGE will move to the Grand Casino Hotel & Resort, with all seminars and activities held on the premises of the host hotel.

The Water Garden Expo kicks off on Wednesday afternoon with contractor boot camps to teach in-depth business concepts and processes.

The presentation of POND Trade magazine's 2022 Water Artisans of the Year will kick off Thursday morning with 21 seminars following over the next two days. Three educational tracks will provide learning opportunities for all knowledge levels. Attendees can visit with the largest gathering of manufacturers of any trade show and network with successful professionals from across the country and beyond.

As always, the Water Garden Expo is free to attend and open to trade professionals only. Visit [www.wgexpo.com](http://www.wgexpo.com) or call 866/219-3561 to register or for more information.



**New OASE AquaMax Eco Premium Low-Voltage Pumps**

Designed with safety in mind, AquaMax Eco Premium 12-volt pumps are low-voltage versions of the renowned OASE AquaMax Eco Premium pumps. Perfect for recreational ponds, they feature a grounding plate for unparalleled security. AquaMax Eco Premium pumps feature dual intake capability, pulling coarse debris particles through the large-surface, wrap-around pre-filter, or through the adjustable second inlet connected to an optional satellite filter or surface skimmer. The AquaMax 12-volt pump can also be plumbed in-line by removing the pre-filter and using the mounting bracket to secure the pump. Built-in Environmental Function Control (EFC) automatically shuts off the pump if run dry or clogged to prevent pump damage.



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**Moleaer Expands its Nanobubble Generator Portfolio**

Moleaer, the global leader in nanobubble technology, has announced it is expanding its product suite with the launch of Kingfisher. This latest model incorporates four years of nanobubble research and development, real-world performance data, and client feedback from the surface water treatment industry, and in particular, lake and pond management firms. The Kingfisher improves water quality in water bodies at golf courses, lakes and ponds at condominium facilities, as well as irrigation ponds and canals in residential communities. It is particularly suited to address the continuous challenge of sustainably improving water quality by reducing and controlling algae while minimizing muck and odors in various bodies of water.

The Kingfisher takes in air from the environment, compresses it through the generator and injects nanobubbles 2,500 times smaller than a grain of salt back into the water. This in turn enriches the water with oxygen and nanobubbles, which form mild oxidants for disinfection and aids in restoring aquatic ecosystems sustainably without chemicals. This product provides its users with several benefits including: improvements in water quality and clarity, increased dissolved oxygen at the sediment layer, algae oxidation, reduction of odor causing compounds and midge fly habitats, and enhanced fish and ecosystem health. The system is designed to be simple to install, requires little maintenance, has a small footprint, and is powered via a regular electrical outlet with no special power requirements.

**EasyPro Adds Extra Large Basin to Economy Basin Line**

EasyPro is now carrying an extra large 58-inch basin for larger water feature projects. The 58" Economy Fountain Basin was designed for concrete blocks to sit under the grating, which greatly increases load capacity. It features clear span grating (no legs) for easy pump installation and removal.



To request your full color catalog or for more information about EasyPro products, call 800/448-3873 or visit [easypro.com](http://easypro.com).



**Anjon Manufacturing Breaks Ground This Summer**

Anjon Manufacturing breaks ground on an impressive eight-million-dollar campus just outside of St. Louis, Missouri. The Mayor of O'Fallon Missouri, Bill Hennessy, other city officials, along with staff and family members from Anjon took part in the ceremonial groundbreaking.

As a family owned and operated company from the start Owner / CEO Jon Lottes stated the guiding vision of Anjon Manufacturing "Making a Difference" will continue with the expansion. This commitment to our fantastic staff, customers and their communities all while connecting people to nature each day is our goal. The new campus will kick off Anjon's 25th Year Celebration.

Anjon offers the highest quality products at the best service and value to complete beautification projects of any scale, coast to coast. Anjon Manufacturing prides itself on its growth into one of the most trusted and respected manufacturers of water garden supplies in the country.

Upwards of 40 additional staff will be added once the campus is completed. Projected to be operational in the first quarter of 2023 the site will boast 110,000 square feet of office and production space. Mounted on the roof, Utility-Scale Solar Panels will create an energy system that provides both ecological and financial benefits for years to come. The larger space will allow Anjon to continue to develop new to the industry products as well as servicing the ever-growing customer base.

The new facility will feature an onsite fitness center, indoor & outdoor soccer fields, indoor batting cages, and training facility. The additional space allows for onsite contractor training and educational seminars. All of this surrounded by 3 acres of water features and ponds with over 4 acres of natural prairie land.

Contact Anjon Manufacturing at [sales@anjonponds.com](mailto:sales@anjonponds.com) for more info.

**Northern Midwest ZNA Koi Show & Pond Expo in St. Louis**

The Gateway Koi and Pond Club will host the 20th Annual Northern Midwest ZNA Koi Show & Pond Expo on Sept. 23-25, 2022. The event will be held at Timberwinds Nursery in Ellisville, Missouri, and is open to the public with free admission. Hours are Friday 3-5pm, Saturday 9am-5pm and Sunday 10am-2pm.

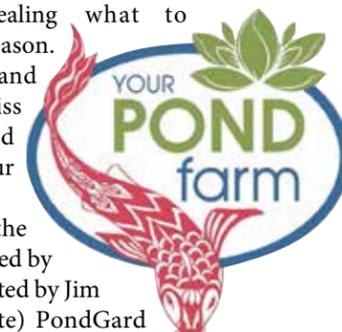
There will be raffles, attendance prizes, koi judging and speakers on various topics of ponding and gardening Saturday, along with the judges' talk and tour of the tanks on Sunday at 10am. Show koi will be removed from tanks on Sunday at noon for transport home. Koi, goldfish and pond and garden-related vendors will be open all three days.

The show schedule is available on [www.nmzna.net](http://www.nmzna.net) and [www.gatewaykoiandpondclub.org](http://www.gatewaykoiandpondclub.org). Bring the family and come enjoy the beautiful living jewels of Japan! This is an outdoor event, rain or shine!



**Your Pond Farm Announces 2022 Show Dates**

The 2022 Your Pond Farm Trade Show will be taking place on Wednesday, Oct. 19 and Thursday, Oct. 20. Your Pond Farm will be revealing what to expect for the upcoming season. There will be giveaways and so much more! Do not miss this educational event! Food Trucks will be here for your convenience.



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  - Raw material cost increases
  - When we can expect change
  - What product to use and when
  - PondGard Accessories and their benefits

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**First Custom Glass Koi Aquarium at Fitz's Fish Ponds**

The barn at Fitz's Fish Pond Headquarters went under major renovations, and the results are simply beautiful! A new pergola and patio with synthetic turf, a water garden with a waterfall, an awesome outdoor kitchen with a wood-fire pizza oven and a custom glass koi aquarium.

This glass koi aquarium is the first ever built by FFP, and we are excited to be able to bring this into our customers' outdoor entertainment space. This glass koi aquarium utilizes a 4-inch-thick acrylic glass and spans 4 by 8 feet, providing an optimal viewing window for homeowners to enjoy. The size of the glass viewing window can be tailored to a customer's preference. This amazing 8,000-gallon formal pond was built with two 4-inch aerated bottom drains from Evolution Aqua, a 36-inch K+ Pressure Filter, and a 110-watt EvoUV, all which work to provide aeration while keeping the water crystal clear for the koi and the homeowner to enjoy.

Throughout the course of this build, we received some guidance and advice from some additional experts in the industry. Tim Waddington from Quality Nishikigoi and Mark McKinney from Clearly Aquatics came and helped us tweak a few things with this build. We learned a lot while building this pond, and we can't wait to showcase these koi with more builds just like this one. This is the perfect feature for a koi enthusiast to enjoy their prized koi from all angles.

This project also features a hybrid water garden with advanced filtration. One of the highlights here is the massive 10-foot piece of bluestone that was sourced from a friend's property in Pennsylvania. The bluestone not only acts as a bridge, but it also stops the flow of the waterfall just enough so that the viewer gets a crystal-clear, still-water view of the koi while they still benefit from the aeration. This build utilized an undergravel suction grid, a 24-inch K+ Pressure Filter, a 55-watt EvoUV and a tempest filter.

We love continuing to advance in our industry, and these glass koi aquariums are one way we want to bring our business to the next level while offering a new way for koi lovers and hobbyists to view and appreciate their koi!



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"Chillin" Like a Villain

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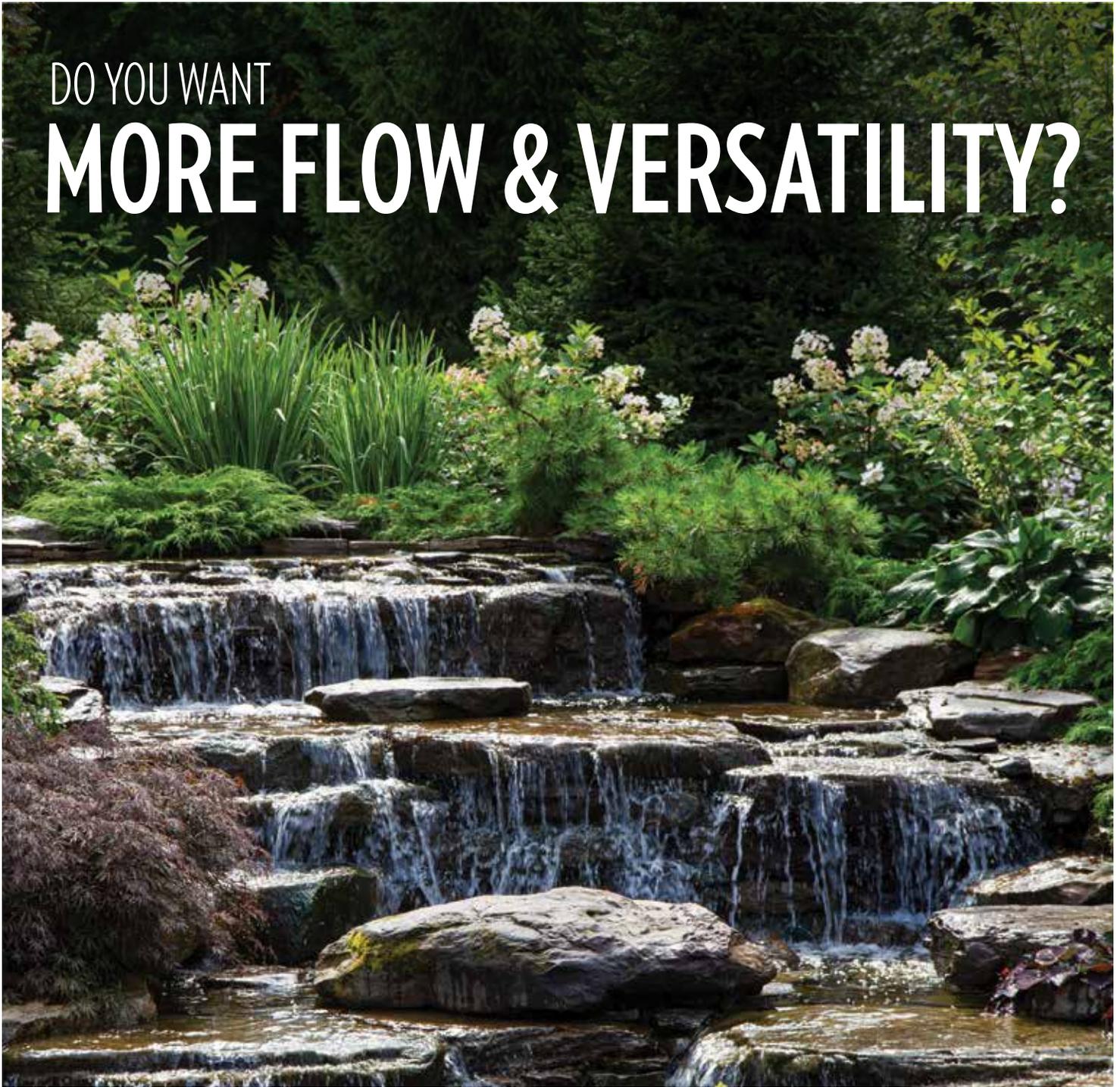


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