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The lotus biomass
harvest in South Alabama p.16

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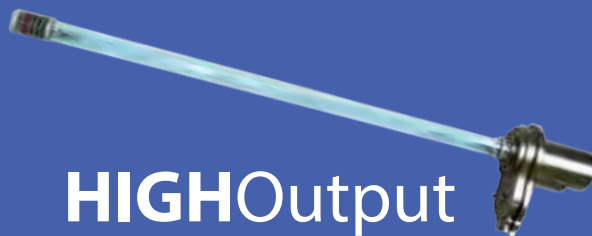
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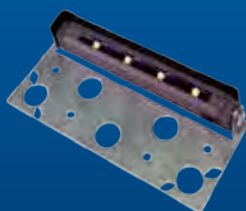
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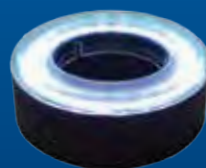
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FEATURES

8 Going Vertical POND CONSTRUCTION

If you've thought about elevating your water-feature game, just look upward, **Landon Malave** says. Adding height in construction with multiple waterfalls can have a dazzling effect, as demonstrated in Malave's showcase project at his personal residence.

16 Don't Fear the Reaper COVER STORY

Lora Lee Gelles never expected to spend an afternoon harvesting lotus plants among the snakes and alligators of lower Alabama, but she made it (and lived to tell about it)! Read about her one-of-a-kind adventure.

22 Riding the Wave

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the Northeast U.S., **Dylan Arlotta** and his colleagues at TRD Designs and Aquascapes East had to resort to clever, creative measures to keep their workforce going — including finishing off a long-awaited pond renovation at his boss's personal residence.

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Crafting a waterscape with a strong balance of aquatic life and plants is a common goal of most water feature builders. A pond can't fully mature unless there are basic accommodations for species succession. **Jamie Beyer** is here with all the specifics.



36 From Farm to Pond LANGUAGE OF KOI

Do you ever wonder about all the things that go into safely shipping koi and goldfish from farms to resellers and customers? The logistics are a bit more complex than you might imagine. **Margaret Cleveland** takes us along for the wild journey from farm to pond.

43 Contemporary Quietude

Kent Wallace delivers another impressive installment in his Best Pond Practices series with a stunning formal courtyard pond build in a luxury Las Vegas community. With his customer's koi quarantining in New Jersey, they certainly racked up some frequent flyer miles!

50 Hot in Cleveland

The Atlantic-OASE Professional Conference returned in person in 2022 with a full house of eager industry professionals ready to learn and network. **Demi Fortuna & Caitlyn Winkle** were there to capture all the activities, accolades and amusement.



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Upcoming Events

2023

January 11 - 13
MANTS
Baltimore Convention Center
Baltimore, Maryland
www.mants.com

January 31 - February 2
National Hardware Show
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas, Nevada
www.nationalhardwareshow.com

March 1 - 3
Water Garden Expo
Grand Casino Hotel & Resort
Shawnee, Oklahoma
www.wgexpo.com

March 10 - 12
Central Florida Koi and Goldfish Show
Avanti Palms Resort
Orlando, Florida
www.cfks.org

October 18 - 20
Hardscape North America
Kentucky Exposition Center
Louisville, Kentucky
www.hardscapena.com

November 13 - 15
POOL 1 SPA 1 PATIO Expo
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas, Nevada

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Publisher's Perspective

Just Add Water!

Out with the old, and in with the new! Happy New Year to you all, and best wishes for a great new year.

So, what's on tap (no pun intended) for 2023? Are you promoting certain types of water features? Have you developed a niche? Are you planning on building some recreational ponds?



What about expanding your operations? Whatever your 2023 plans are, I have three words for you — JUST ADD WATER! Water is the life force for our industry (and our species, for that matter), and we at POND Trade magazine are excited to see what's in store for you in the new year.

I found myself surrounded by water earlier in the year when I visited Ten Mile Creek Nursery in Hartford, Alabama, just a few miles north of the

Florida state line. You probably noticed the photo for my cover story ("Don't Fear the Reaper," pg. 16). I was thrilled to experience first hand the lotus biomass harvest, when the Ten Mile Creek crew sustainably processes every part of the lotus flower for a handful of different applications. Even though I had to face my biggest fears — snakes and alligators! — it was a very memorable trip worth checking out.

My time in the lotus trenches made me appreciate Jamie Boyer's article ("The Secret to Succession," pg. 32), in which he describes the aquatic maturation process that occurs in every body of water. Whether you own or install ponds (or both), there are several takeaways here you won't want to miss.

I also enjoyed Margaret Cleveland's Language of Koi feature, which details the process of packaging and shipping live fish ("From Farm to Pond," pg. 36). It's so interesting to look back almost 100 years and see the progression of how koi and goldfish make it from breeder to consumer.

Speaking of frequent-flyer fish, Kent Wallace arranged for his client's koi to be quarantined in New Jersey while he completed yet another stunning formal. contemporary, high-end pond installation in Las Vegas ("Contemporary Quietude," pg. 43). I think the fish would agree when I say their new luxury home was well worth all the travel!

Happy PONDerin'!

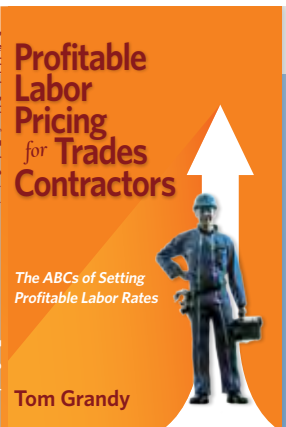
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Centered over the middle of the pond, the bridge acts as a perfect balance beam spanning the water.

Going Vertical

Add height & depth with grottos & vertical waterfalls

by Landon Malave,
LCM Waterfalls & Ponds

The process of building grottos and vertical waterfalls is nerve wracking, coming with an increase in liability for your client and danger for your crew. It's the farthest thing from straightforward or simple. So, why do I like building them? I like a challenge, and the results can be absolutely breathtaking.

In front of our home, I have constructed an oasis that our children, friends and visiting family can enjoy. I had originally planned to build this pond and grotto farther away from my house out of concern for my children's safety. However, the deck off the front of the house was a perfect viewing point for the pond and grotto I had dreamed of creating, so we took the calculated risk. Over time, this outdoor living space has changed in its use and beauty, but the addition of our



The gunite shell is reinforced over the liner (top, left), and the plumbing is ready. There's no better place to splash (bottom, left) then dangling your feet off the bridge. After the grotto was installed (right), we utilized other boulders to balance the feature, making sure it's not all vertical.



grotto water feature with the adjoining smaller waterfalls and pond has brought the entire area to life.

This space serves multiple purposes. The interconnected water sources are dynamic and interesting on their own, but with the addition of the interactive bridge through the middle, it has become the perfect place for our children to feed our collection of Japanese koi. It also serves as the perfect location for a midday cool-off or a drink at sunset with my wife. The view from our deck gives an incredible vantage point for the koi as well. The feature's close proximity to our home creates a feeling of being away, yet you only have to step out the front door to experience it. We are privileged to enjoy all this beauty every single day.



Kids will be kids, so making sure it's structurally sound is a vital part of construction.

Under the Surface

There are many unseen structural elements involved when building a grotto. Under the grotto, the rocks sit atop and are embedded into a considerable height of concrete. There is an increased liability with creating something so structurally complex, as there is an increased danger of rocks falling and injuring someone. If not supported correctly, you may be setting yourself up for major failures.

Here at LCM Waterfalls and Ponds, in addition to the concrete structure beneath the grotto, we also

utilize other large boulders on the backside to help support the large vertical rock, which is also concreted in and supported. Be sure to consider head height so you can have a comfortable walk into the grotto area. Balancing 8-foot boulders across other rocks is not a feat to undertake lightly. If the rock on top is not supported correctly, it could create a catastrophic failure of the entire feature and result in major injury. It is quite literally a balancing act utilizing small rocks, concrete and perfect positioning to ensure a structurally sound grotto.

Building something of this nature comes with many other considerations for you and for your clients. If you're pondering going vertical, make sure you think about the sound, line of sight and overall impact.

Sound

In terms of sound, not all water features are right next to seating areas. So, with a higher waterfall, you can achieve more of that peaceful water noise your client craves, even from a distance. Building grottos and caves also allows the water sounds to bounce, creating natural acoustics that help to project sound out into the landscape. Whether they are drowning out high traffic on nearby roadways or dampening the unpleasant sounds of loud neighbors, the roaring sounds of Mother Nature can be successfully mimicked by adding height to your client's water feature.

For this project, I considered the location of the grotto to create the perfect acoustics from multiple locations. The sound bounces peacefully toward our bedroom window at the perfect volume for sleeping at night, and placing the water feature way back behind the tree allowed us to continue enjoying pleasant conversations on the patio without an overwhelming level of water noise. The slight angle of the water feature gives us the benefit of the wonderful sights and sounds of the water feature from multiple locations near the house, just beyond a large ponderosa pine, while also making a huge impact for anyone coming up our driveway. This strategic element has created a wonderful sense of delightful discovery and surprise for new visitors coming to our home.

Line of Sight

There are typically multiple vantage points on every waterfall. We try to look at every angle, back-drop and view on the homeowner's behalf. Any possible viewpoint, from the windows, patios and decks to that of visitors and people driving by, we



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asked ourselves, “Is what we are seeing beautiful, and are we blocking any unsightly items in the homeowner’s landscape?” Water features can be used to cover an ugly fence, provide privacy from a nosy neighbor and, of course, serve as a pleasant interference between your client and any unsightly traffic that might otherwise be in their immediate line of sight.

I decided to point this waterfall directly at my house while making sure it was visible to anyone

Building large waterfalls and grottos have a heavy impact on both sights and sounds. Visitors entering your property will be immediately struck by both the visual beauty and the auditory delight of a towering water feature.

coming up our driveway. We incorporated an outdoor kitchen to complete the living space. We knew that when we were seated on the ground, this would obstruct the view of the pond and waterfall.

Thankfully, the view from the deck helped to compensate for that. Even with the deck being the same 7-foot elevation, the grotto still has a massive visual effect from the deck. This would be lost if the waterfall were any shorter. The height of the waterfall and grotto also give the entire water feature a balance at every angle and perspective while always remaining in the line of sight.

Overall Impact

Building large waterfalls and grottos have a heavy impact on both sights and sounds. Visitors entering your property will be immediately struck by both the visual beauty and the auditory delight of a towering water feature. You can use a grotto to covertly conceal anything you or your client would rather keep hidden, such as a slide into a swimming pool. Softening that visual statement with various aquatic plants also creates an opportunity for additional seasonal beauty in the outdoor living space.

We included low-voltage lighting throughout the pond, waterfall and existing landscape to ensure it could be enjoyed in the evening as well. Adding large vertical elements helps create a one-of-a-kind waterfall that makes the feature stand apart from the rest.



Strategically setting character rocks (top) inside and around the feature helps to tie it all together. Having the waterfall facing toward the driveway allows a perfect ambiance (middle) to sit and have dinner with family and friends. This is the view that you see (above) when you pull up the driveway around the big pine tree (bottom), it is stunning and sure to catch everyone’s attention.



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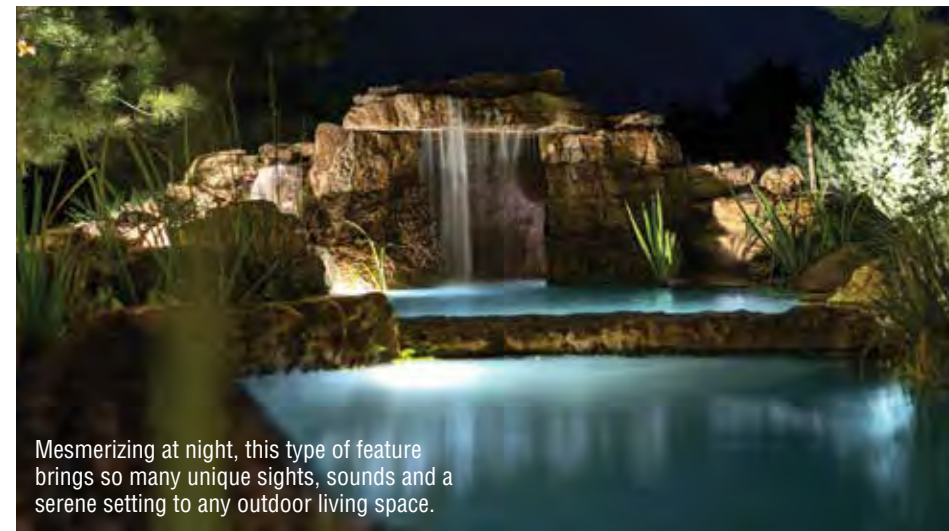
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Mesmerizing at night, this type of feature brings so many unique sights, sounds and a serene setting to any outdoor living space.

The height of the adjoining waterfalls also offers a visual balance, strategically stepping down from the 7-foot grotto into different elevations on both sides. The four other waterfalls situated at various heights and angles also help to soften the visual appearance of the grotto. We made sure there were crevices and turns within it to help to create a more tranquil and unique set of waterfalls, as opposed to having a

straight sheet of water flowing down.

As you can see, creating a unique grotto waterfall is both challenging and incredibly rewarding. Though the construction of such a project comes with inherent risks, when done correctly, this hard work will pay off in the form of a magnificent spectacle that adds incredible ambiance to any outdoor living space. In our view, the risks are well worth the reward. 

About the Author

Landon Malave is the owner of LCM Waterfalls & Ponds, previously known as LCM Landscape & Design. Operating out of Elbert, Colorado, he services the front range and is taking his efforts nationwide. He grew up on a farm in Eastern Colorado, earning his associate's degree in horticulture and a certificate in landscape design. He has been in business for more than 10 years and is excited about the future of building multiple businesses, honing in on his skills in the water feature industry. He studied under his mentor and now friend, Rick Pursell, who has 50 years of experience building waterfalls all over the world. Landon lives on a tree farm with his wife and three children.



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| **Cover** Story |

Don't Fear the Reaper

Harvesting lotus biomass in South Alabama



Lotus ponds are drained to allow easy access for harvesting.

by Lora Lee Gelles,

Publisher, POND Trade magazine

It's so fun to have life experiences! For me, flying down to Alabama to visit Laura Bancroft of Ten Mile Creek Nursery was one of them. Earlier in 2022, Laura invited me to come out during what I thought was the harvest of lotus — but this was on a whole other level!

Laura went on to explain to me that I would be experiencing a “biomass harvest.” This happens once a year — a team from New York arrives and sets up camp for a few weeks, and then the fun begins.

Roots of the Harvest

So, how did this whole amazing process come to fruition? Ten Mile Creek Nursery is the largest grower of certified organic lotus in the United States, where they harvest and sell about 400

different varieties of lotus. Laura is especially well known in the business for her lotus, and she works alongside her son Ben, who has been taking over the reins of the biomass production.

They were contacted by Ashland, an international biochemical company based in New York, to grow certified organic lotus en masse to be produced and used specifically for high-end skin creams, suntan lotions and other beauty and health products. Ashland was previously working with lotus growers in China and Thailand, but by the time the plants were picked and shipped, they had lost most of the fluid before they could be processed in the United States.

Ten Mile Creek Nursery has 25 acres divided into 17 ponds that are filled with certified organic lotus grown specifically for biomass harvest. The crews move from pond to pond each day until every lotus is cut down. Everything is tagged from each pond that the lotus comes out of for quality control

purposes. Some crews are cutting, and other crews are in charge of taking the harvest back to the processing area. The cut lotus needs to be fresh and processed immediately before any liquid is lost.

Laura had me out in the field at 5:30 a.m. to beat the extreme summer heat of South Alabama. Ten Mile Creek Nursery hires a seasonal crew of about 35 people who eagerly show up each day to harvest every part of the lotus — the stem, leaves, buds and flowers. The rhizomes are not harvested, instead left to grow and replenish the ponds.

Laura uses plastic baby pools and scarfs up all of them in her area. Once the large trays of cut lotus make it back to the area where the Ashland team has set up shop for processing, the amazing process begins.

Liquid “Gold”

The harvested lotus stem, leaves, flowers and seed pods are put on a conveyor that carries it into the grinder. From there, the ground biomass goes through a press to remove all the liquid. The fresh green liquid gets pumped out into a barrel-sized container and placed into 5-gallon buckets. Once the liquid is in the bucket, it gets whisked away to a giant onsite walk-in cooler, where it is immediately frozen. The finished frozen product gets shipped back to New York at the end of the harvest, where it is refined without the use of any solvents or chemicals. The result is the wonderful serums, lotions and perfumes that Ashland is in pursuit of for their clients.

Rest assured, nothing goes to waste, for the leftover solid material that they call “cake” is used for compost and returned to the ponds to nourish the next crop of lotus that grows. The daily goal is to process around 5,000 lbs. of fresh biomass. The day I was there, they broke a record and had a weigh-in of 6,700 lbs. Ashland’s goal is to process at least 45,000 lbs. in the two weeks they are there. The total amount this year exceeded that goal by several thousand pounds. (Ten Mile Creek Nursery is paid by the pound.)

After my visit, curiosity got the best of me, and I splurged on a jar of Lotus Night Recovery Cream by



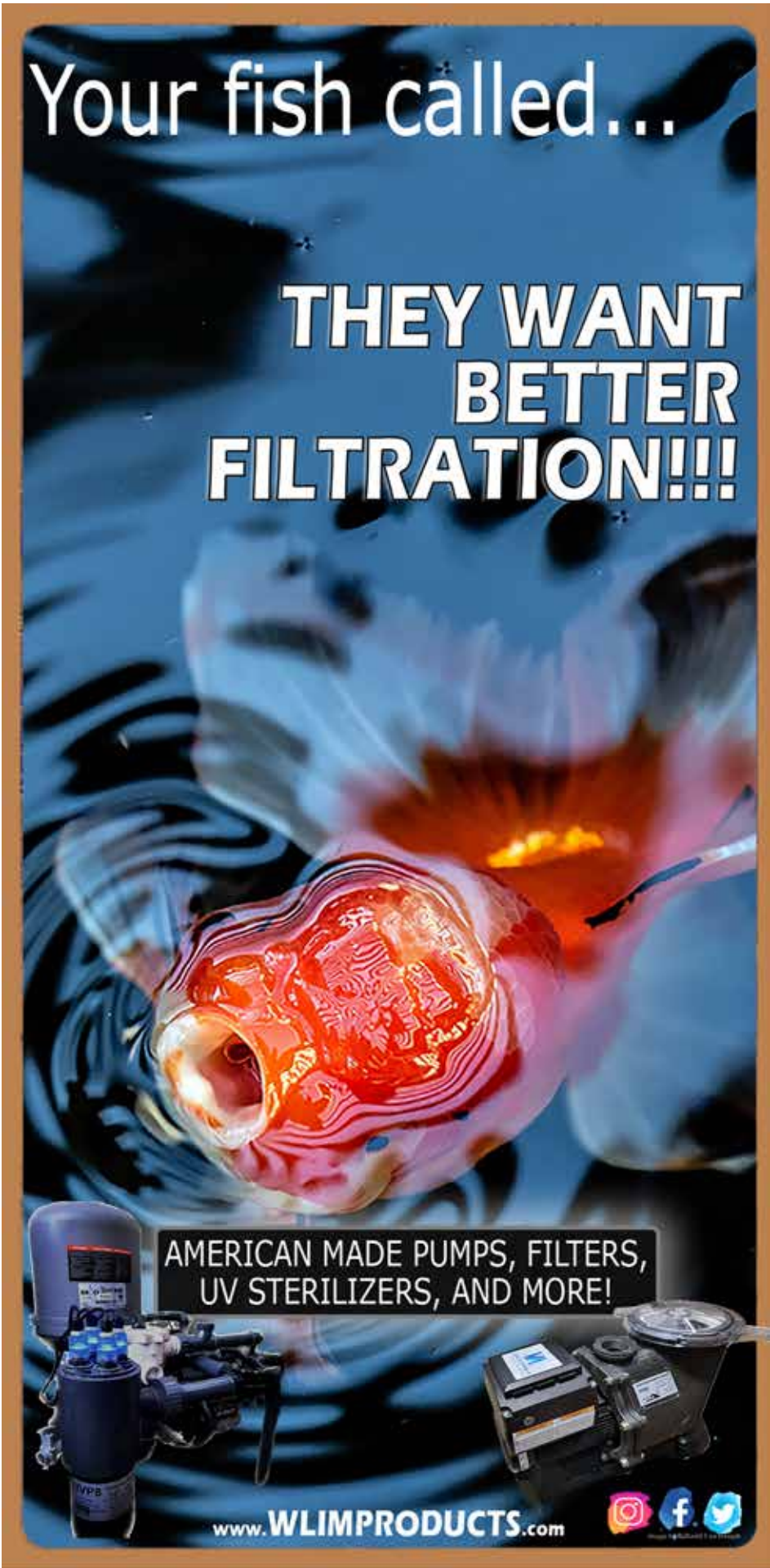
Clockwise from top left: Ponds are divided into smaller growing areas for easy access in care and harvesting. Cut lotus are collected in plastic pools. Leaves must be processed quickly to avoid water loss. Small, immature leaves and underground rhizomes are left to grow in order to re-establish the pond. Harvested biomass is weighed before processing. Lotus is hand-fed onto the conveyor.


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Fresh. Let me tell you, the product is amazing! I can see what all the hype is about — I can see a difference in my skin. There are so many overall health benefits to lotus, and skin creams now make the list. After seeing the process and experiencing the magic of lotus on my skin, now I'm hooked! 

Did Someone Say, "Snake?"

Before I booked my ticket to Alabama, I asked Laura if I would encounter any snakes on my visit to the lotus fields. I told her I was deathly afraid of them. She didn't think I would be that close to the workers, but I told her that I like to get right in there and take photos. She mentioned that they drain the bogs the evening before they work in them so that the snakes can slither out and not cause a problem. She then told me not to worry, for they have someone in the field with a machete at all times. (What??)

Of course, I also had to ask if there was a chance I'd see any alligators, and she replied, "Of course there

are alligators in the area — this is Alabama!" After a short-lived total flip out, I booked my airplane tickets.

As we pulled up to the fields in the morning, I saw a gentleman walking around with a shotgun. I turned to Laura and asked her what was going on. She went on to explain that since it had rained cats and dogs the evening before, whatever water they had drained out of the lotus bogs filled right back up, which meant one thing — snakes! There's nothing like being on-site and hearing someone yell, "Snake!" Everyone stands perfectly still until someone comes over to scare it away. (That's what the shotgun is for.)

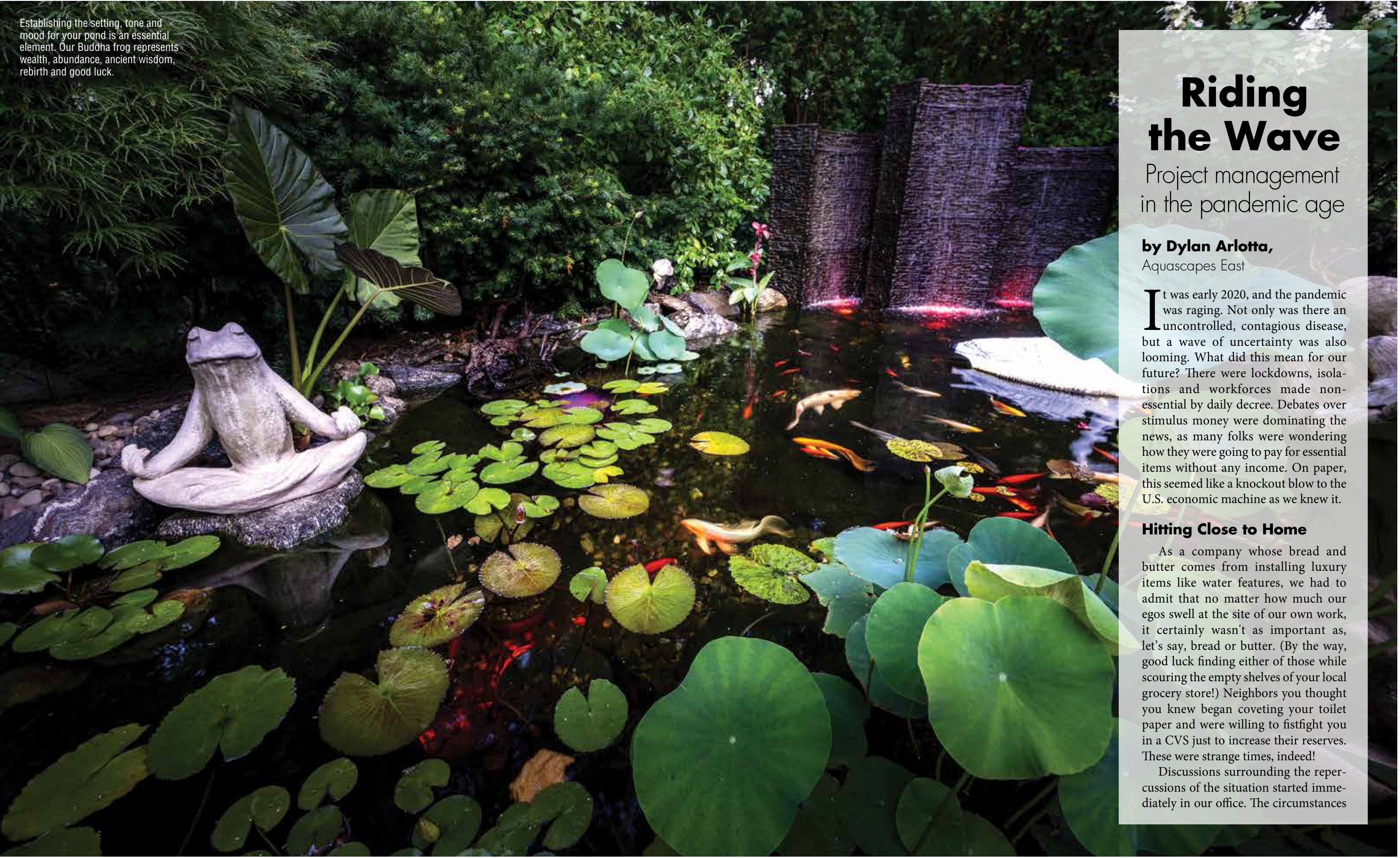
I was out there for 45 minutes, and I heard the scary s-word four times. Laura assures me that most days they see no snakes at all, so I guess I just hit the jackpot. Thankfully I survived, and I want to thank Laura for the crazy adventure that I can now tell my grandchildren about.



This is what we refer to as "cake" (top, left). It is the solid remains after processing, which will then be added back to the ponds. Laura Bancroft (top, right) is pictured with her son, Ben Bancroft. The liquid from processed biomass (middle, right) is collected, and the processed liquid (bottom, right) is immediately frozen. A vile (bottom, left) contains "liquid gold." The grinder (middle, left) separates liquids from the solids.



The work is hard, but the Bancrofts always stop to smell the flowers and appreciate the unique opportunities that growing lotus has brought to the family nursery.

A detailed photograph of a garden pond. In the foreground, a large, light-colored Buddha frog statue sits on a rock, facing the viewer. The pond is filled with numerous lily pads of various sizes and colors, from bright green to yellow and brown. Several goldfish are visible swimming in the water. In the background, a waterfall flows over a series of dark, textured rocks. The surrounding area is filled with dense green foliage, including large-leafed plants and trees.

Establishing the setting, tone and mood for your pond is an essential element. Our Buddha frog represents wealth, abundance, ancient wisdom, rebirth and good luck.

Riding the Wave

Project management in the pandemic age

by **Dylan Arlotta,**
Aquascapes East

It was early 2020, and the pandemic was raging. Not only was there an uncontrolled, contagious disease, but a wave of uncertainty was also looming. What did this mean for our future? There were lockdowns, isolations and workforces made non-essential by daily decree. Debates over stimulus money were dominating the news, as many folks were wondering how they were going to pay for essential items without any income. On paper, this seemed like a knockout blow to the U.S. economic machine as we knew it.

Hitting Close to Home

As a company whose bread and butter comes from installing luxury items like water features, we had to admit that no matter how much our egos swell at the site of our own work, it certainly wasn't as important as, let's say, bread or butter. (By the way, good luck finding either of those while scouring the empty shelves of your local grocery store!) Neighbors you thought you knew began coveting your toilet paper and were willing to fistfight you in a CVS just to increase their reserves. These were strange times, indeed!

Discussions surrounding the repercussions of the situation started immediately in our office. The circumstances



The sun has found its home in the western sky. The golden hour is upon us now. This is when your pond is in all its glory.

were unprecedented, and we felt that this surely meant all the expendable income that fuels our industry and our livelihoods was going to go away quickly. We didn't know how long we might have to endure these lean times to come. We were planning for the worst — and yet hoping for the best.

As we were very close to the epicenter of the outbreak in New York, our service area was burdened with restrictions. We thought for sure that landscaping would not be one of those tasks deemed essential in this regulated atmosphere. Low and behold, we made the list, and each day driving to work felt like commuting on a Saturday. The drive was stress free unless the radio was on. It reminded us of what was happening outside our own isolated worlds. Each day, we waited for the other shoe to drop. Our revenue was going to dry up because so few people were working, or we were going to be told to stop working altogether.

The Boss' Job

With all the time invested in building our team, the last thing that Tom Dieck, owner of TRD Designs and Aquascapes East, wanted to see was everything dissolve, because our guys weren't able to support themselves. So, just like the public-works projects of the Great Depression, we set forth to stem the bleeding that seemed inevitable.

We had been discussing improvements to Dieck's personal pond for a couple of years, but our busy schedule never afforded the time to make the changes we thought were necessary. We found ourselves thinking that this unpredictable atmosphere might be just the opportunity to tackle this project. We would be able to keep the team busy and, most importantly, employed for at least a

couple of more weeks. So, into the schedule it went for late April/early May, right after our water feature opening season.

It had been 13 years since the original feature was installed. As we reminisced

We found ourselves thinking that this unpredictable atmosphere might be just the opportunity to tackle this project.

over one of our first collaborations, a couple of the guys on the maintenance crew disassembled the wet well in the pond. They removed rocks, gravel, pumps and plumbing, and we reminded ourselves of all the design complications the original pond had given us. We had a steep-hill setting, with the slope dropping away from the house and horrible access

to the backyard. The deck encroached on the only flat area we had for a sizeable pond, and yet it still managed to block all the good views from inside the house. So, we created a design that made the most of what we had at the time. On that fateful first day, Dieck showed up with a brand-new excavator and took his first scoop of soil out of the pond — all smiles! Then, the second scoop hit bedrock.

Laughing it all off these 13 years later was easy as we turned our conversation toward what the future held for the pond now that the renovation had started. We get our creative minds churning about what could be done to adapt and overcome all our original design complications. The shallow-water issues due to that bedrock, for example, had the heron winning every time! Not to mention the crappy visibility from inside the house and that dominating deck-scape.

With this being one of Dieck's most visited display ponds, the project had to be top notch. We left the house discussing the addition of fountainscapes, and our team continued to disassemble portions of the old pond.

We assumed this project would buy us some time while we figured out what else the guys could do until people were willing to spend money on frivolous line items like landscaping and water-feature construction again. The forecast looked grim, but at least we had a plan. Forecast as we may, we never claimed to be savvy economists — which is good, because we couldn't have been more wrong with our predictions.

An Unexpected Turn

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 1 million people would commute into and out of New York City each day to fuel the economic powerhouse that is the Big Apple. Just north of the five boroughs that make up the city is the county of Westchester. On any given day, thousands of Westchester County residents

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would join these multitudes on their daily journey. Once the pandemic was in full swing, many commuters were able to trade their travel time for Zoom time. This was a drastic lifestyle change for our soon-to-be clients. They were spending less money on gas, spending more time with their families and, to our surprise, preparing to make huge, new investments in their new lifestyle they were enjoying at home.

So, all of a sudden, our phone started ringing off the hook. Every day there were new inquiries from residents all over Westchester County who wanted to improve the quality of time they were spending at home. We all found ourselves out doing consultations and designs for large projects. The installation and maintenance teams were cranking again, too. We couldn't believe it!

In the Northeast we know that making hay while the sun shines is the name of the game. Do all the business you can handle during the spring, summer and fall just to make it through the long winter. The pond at Dieck's house would have to wait, as we were grateful to have clients to service. We would get back to the boss's pad when we slowed down in the late summer or fall. The world around us was slowing down, but we were speeding up!

Before we knew it, fall was upon us, and we had gone the whole year without being able to make any progress on the project at Dieck's house. Again, we sparked up conversations about possible design improvements as Dieck recounted to his wife the water-feature version of why the cobbler's children had no shoes.

This led to a late-fall pondside powwow, where the decision was made to use a series of Aquascape stacked-slate walls as highlights to the existing pond. These would not only block an open hole in the plant screening toward the neighbor's yard, but they would also bring the water up to a height that would allow visibility of moving water from inside the home.

With passion for the project flowing once again, we headed back to the shop to take inventory of the walls we had in stock. Not so hot — we had only a couple

of mismatched pieces. We put together an order and sent it over to our distributor, wondering if we might have time to knock everything out before winter arrived.

Out of Stock

We were ready to tackle the project again, but we could not get our hands on the fountain pieces we needed to pull off the renovation.

It turned out that the entire industry was seeing a wave of investment in outdoor living from most of the country spending more time at home. Demand for some products meant they were becoming hard to find and keep in stock. Lo and behold, Aquascape's curved stacked-

Railings and benches along the edge of the deck that faced the pond could be removed and turned into a series of steps, allowing a much simpler approach to the project. This sounded like a great idea! As soon as our carpenter slowed down, we could get him onto this deck makeover.

No Slowdown in Sight

But, business in 2021 kept booming. Now people were working from home permanently, and there was an exodus of Manhattanites into Westchester. We were bombarded with waves of first-timers who had just bought a new house with a pond, and they had no idea what to do with it.



When mimicking a natural stream, remember: "Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it."

slate wall fountains, the very water walls we desired, were one of those hot items. On top of the customer demand, this product is produced in China, which was experiencing supply-chain problems of its own.

We assumed this supply issue would eventually pass. Winter was coming, anyhow, so the concept got pushed to the back burner. Dieck lamented to his very patient wife, letting her know it would all be worth it in the end.

As our quest for the ever-elusive walls continued, discussions were underway regarding a remodeling of the deck.

We were busier than ever! The water walls still weren't available, and we were instructed not to hold our breath while we waited for them to appear. We considered trying to gather them piecemeal from other contractors, but we had no time to scour the eastern seaboard for our bounty.

Finally in late-fall 2021, a couple of walls became available. During the winter, we pushed our creativity and started the process of Frankensteining a few pieces together — cutting the walls apart and putting them back together in a new way to create a new and unique



The first principle of landscape design (left) is simplicity. Although the blending and fabrication of fountains is not so simple, you know when you've got it right! As important as it is to have a plan (right) and follow through, it is more important to have a plan to relax and enjoy the fruits of your labor.

fountainscape. This time, we were going to combine two curved walls with a left-over section of a stacked slate urn from our graveyard (where used fountain pieces go to die). Pre-fabbing the items over the winter was the best we could do until spring arrived and they could be custom installed on site.

Trouble in Paradise?

As Christmas 2021 rolled around, the pressure was clearly rising in Dieck's household. This unfinished pond had him hearing it from all sides! Just like any other family, the Dieck family was spending more time at home together after the isolation of 2020. They had found themselves gathering on the deck looking at this dismantled pond for almost two years now.

Early 2022 heralded three important announcements for Dieck, including the marriage of his eldest daughter and the engagement of his second eldest. Both of these events would involve gatherings at the house, which meant the disaster in the backyard had to be completed posthaste.

With deadlines looming, it was with great relief that Dieck received his third important announcement of the year. The water walls were finally in stock again! Even better, a whole mess load of them had been set aside for us and were scheduled for delivery.

All Hands on Dieck's Deck

As soon as the delivery arrived, we

ran the fountain pieces over to the Dieck house. Heeding his family's friendly advice, he had already contracted our carpenter to make over the deck, and the renovation was going strong. With all this time to dream, Dieck had come up with a few more bells and whistles. Cable rails made the railings practically disappear into the surrounding woods. Further collaboration with our masons resulted in the addition of an inviting bluestone landing that overlooks the feature and allows visitors to get up close and personal with the pond life.

With the pond already mostly dismantled, we were able to manipulate the liner and massage the pond edges to squeeze out about 4 more inches of depth from the entire pond. Fountainscapes sprung up out of the rock work in no time now that the proper materials had arrived. A series of tall water walls would rise up and out of the pond to block the screening issue with the neighbor. The custom feature we Frankensteined over the winter settled in nicely on the left side of the pond and provided a bonus view from the family room. Prior to this renovation, this room had no good view of the water.

After two years of not having the resources to pull off this project, it was now all hands on deck. When the Friday before Independence Day rolled around, we were installing color-changing lights like mad and swapping in new Ecowave pumps that use only a fraction of the

electricity of the original pumps. The custom fountain was getting its last coats of paint. The carpenters were still putting finishing touches on the cable rails and trimming the deck planters.


That Sunday, Dieck's daughter was having a meet and greet at the house for her wedding party. Every item had to be finished, and the site had to be spotless. Friday steamed along into Saturday, and it was time for all those finishing touches. We left work that Saturday delegating to Dieck the responsibility of turning on the feature after the last bit of paint on the fountain had dried.

Party Time

I wasn't there to witness the wedding party marveling at the pond's facelift, but when I came in to work on Monday, the first thing Dieck did was show us a video on his phone. Thirty some-odd people were hanging out on the new deck with the shimmering of the new water walls as a backdrop. The color-changing lights installed in the top of the walls cast a dancing reflection of waves onto the canopy of trees above. This mesmerizing light show could be seen from anywhere on the deck or in the house. Knowing the team pulled it off under pressure left me feeling warm and fuzzy inside. What a beautiful get together for the boss' daughter!

Wait a minute. I took a closer look at the video, and this definitely wasn't a wedding party! Dieck had hosted a large

group of his neighbors for a different party on the new deck. As I came to this realization, Dieck's video footage panned upward to reveal fireworks exploding in the night sky.

How he managed to squeeze in an extra party that somehow got organized between the time we left on Saturday afternoon and later that very evening (complete with fireworks), I'll never understand. Only slightly more perplexing is how he managed to avoid getting kicked out of the house with that backyard in shambles for two years. We were happy to come to his rescue! 

About the Authors

Dylan Arlotta of Aquascapes

East has been installing water features for 25 years in the Hudson Valley of New York. He loves to embrace the randomness of nature and does his

best to incorporate the subtle nuances he has observed while out hiking the Catskills and surrounding areas. Realizing every achievement opens the door to a new challenge and reflecting on what each separate water feature teaches him is what keeps him coming back for more.

Tom Dieck, owner of TRD

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





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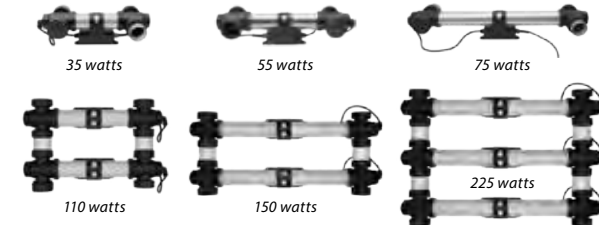
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The Secret to **Succession**

Understanding the maturation of a water garden

by Jamie Beyer,
Midwest Waterscapes

Whenver a water garden owner asks me about water clarity or algae problems, I always ask them when the pond was installed. What has been done to improve water clarity, control algae or even clean the pond? Have they added any chemicals? If so, which ones, and when were they added?

The answers to these questions give me perspective as to which stage of succession is occurring in the water garden. An old pond that has been operating for many years, for example, should be in a “climax stage” of succession if it has been allowed to mature naturally. The concept of succession in how a pond matures was not even on my radar until I started comparing it to succession in terrestrial ecosystems. When comparing the two ecosystems, there are some differences, of course, but the concept that succession occurs in both started to make more sense.

Terrestrial Succession

Let’s discuss terrestrial succession first, since most of us have had at least one biology course in high school, where we learned the concept of plant succession. It’s quite simple. When a piece of land is cleared of all vegetation, whether by a natural disaster or by humankind, there will appear to be nothing growing. In the first week, you will get a flush of small seedling plants — almost always annual weeds like crabgrass, pig weed and whatever other annual weeds you have in your area. The following year, you will still have these annual plants, and the species may change, but they are still mostly annuals.

In the following years, you will start to see a

few perennial plants become established. These plants can be grasses or even small seedling trees and shrubs, but they will still be dominated by the annual plants. As time goes on, you will see a shift to mostly perennial plants and fewer annuals. The perennial plant population will shift toward more trees or almost all grasses. Annual plants start to become scarce. The type of perennial plants depends largely on the local region, as they are influenced by available sunlight, nutrients and seed sources.

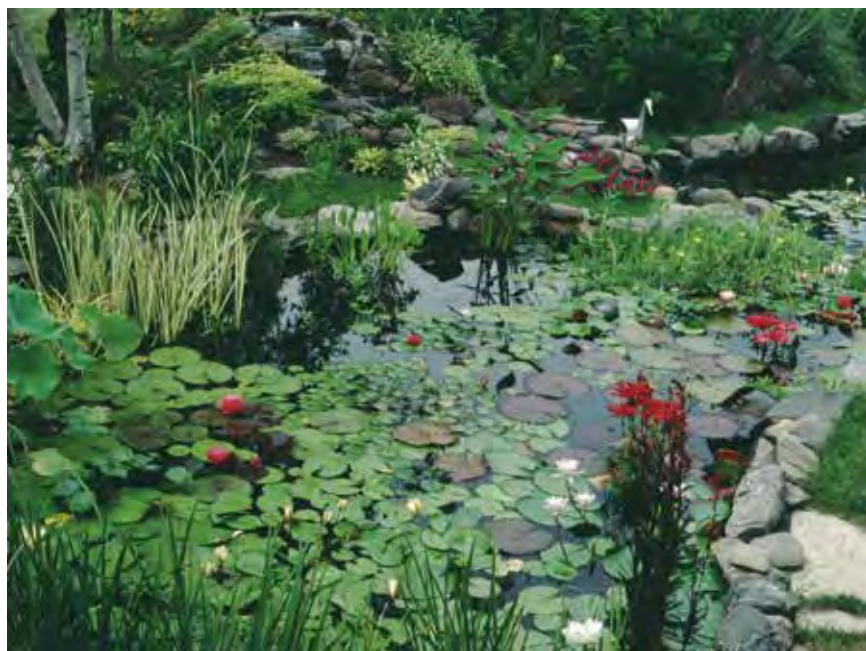
The important principle is that the ecosystem becomes more stable — the variety of plant species will be almost the same from one year to the next, with only small differences. This is what we mean by the “climax stage” of succession. However, this stability can be disrupted by animals, humans and weather patterns like drought.

Aquatic Succession

Now equate plant succession in a terrestrial ecosystem to an aquatic one. In a new water garden with virtually no plants, the first plants to show up are annuals. These are the single-celled alga or planktonic algae that manifest in a pea-green soup situation in some ponds. It may also show up as a somewhat cloudy pond. There are many hundreds of species of alga, but there are always a few that dominate. They all look almost the same unless you look at them under a microscope.

The first perennial that shows up can be string algae. We all know that plant. When string algae takes over, it dominates for available nutrients and sunlight, making the occurrence of annual planktonic algae rarer. String algae also need a substrate to grow on, like rocks or rubber liner. When the water

Mature waterlilies cover the surface of a water garden in the climax stage of succession. They are both beautiful and beneficial to maintaining the ecosystem’s stability. Adding varieties of lilies that flower profusely can speed up succession and magnify the beauty of the water.



A water garden that has a diverse collection of aquatic plants is a more stable ecosystem. The variety of aquatic plants amazing in this water garden, exhibiting absolutely beautiful textures and colors.

The focus for a water gardener should be to speed up and preserve the climax stages of succession. The healthy patina layer is our goal. We do not want to add something toxic that can kill the biofilm, nor do we want to scrub it off.



Good circulation with the addition of waterfalls is critical to the development of the biofilm (patina) that is dependent on the increased oxygen levels that is added by the waterfalls.

garden is still new, the rocks and liner have not had a chance to develop a biofilm. I like to call it the patina of a pond. It can take several years for this biofilm patina to develop, and in it are perennial surface algae. This is when succession becomes more evident and can be a friend to us. Where there is a mature biofilm on the surfaces in the pond that string algae normally would grow on, that substrate becomes unavailable for string algae to establish itself.

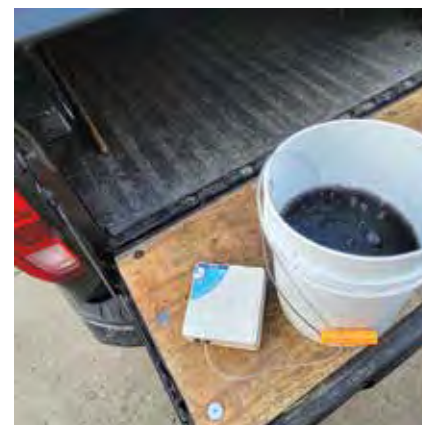
Turning the Dial

The process of plant succession in both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems can be somewhat controlled. We can purposely plant the types of plants we want to grow on land, and the same is true with aquatic systems. We can add all kinds of waterlilies and marginal plants, as well as floating plants. These perennial plants can change the character of an ecosystem, thus outcompeting string algae.

We can also add bacteria to an aquatic ecosystem to rapidly encourage biofilm development. Bacteria speeds up the process of nitrogen cycle succession. (Yes, there is even chemical succession in an aquatic environment.) The right kinds of bacteria are responsible for ammonia being degraded to nitrites — both still toxic to fish. Another kind of bacteria degrades nitrites to nitrates, which are normally not toxic to fish.

The focus for a water gardener should be to speed up and preserve the climax stages of succession. The healthy patina layer is our goal. We do not want to add something toxic that can kill the biofilm, nor do we want to scrub it off. This sets the patina development back to the initial stages of succession. Of course, if the biofilm is removed, we could then add more bacteria, and the succession cycle theoretically starts over. By preserving the climax stage, you can avoid the repeated cycle of all that extra work of power washing, scrubbing and adding chemicals. The patina is the pond's natural biological filter.

In ponds where the biofilm has been preserved, it is rare to see much string algae. However, you will see string algae in streams or areas of the pond where the biofilm was allowed to dry out over winter. You can also see degradation of the patina when water circulation has been reduced in the entire pond, or even in areas I call dead zones. In these anoxic, or low-oxygen areas, you will see the sloughing off of the patina.



Transporting a bucket of muck on a warm day from a mature pond to a newly established pond speeds up invertebrate and bacteria succession. It is vital to provide aeration so that the critters in the bucket are well oxygenated. Here is a battery-powered air pump providing the aeration.

Succeeding With Succession

Succession occurs in all ecological systems. We have been talking about plant and nitrogen-cycle succession, but critter succession is also a natural occurrence. These are the invertebrates and other small animals that naturally occur in mature ponds. One way of speeding up the cycle of critter succession is to add muck (or bottom sediment) from a healthy, mature pond to a newly established pond. You are adding not only bacteria, but also thousands of species of very small invertebrates that normally take time to colonize a new ecosystem. This is speeding up a succession of invertebrates.

This sediment is best collected from a pond that is mature, with healthy fish and plants. Take a fine-mesh net and scrape the bottom of the pond where the sediment is only an inch or two deep. Muck from a deep depth will contain fewer invertebrates, since there is less oxygen at the deeper depths. Place it in a 5-gallon bucket with a lot of the pond water. Transport with aeration, since all the critters in it need oxygen. On a warm day, it can become anoxic quickly!

Ponds that are in the climax stage of succession, whether we are talking plants, nitrogen cycles or invertebrates,

have achieved a biodiverse aquatic community. The more diversity of plants and animals we have in our ponds, the more stable they are.

It is apparent that succession takes place in every ecosystem. After seeing how it works in terrestrial ecosystems, it is easier to see that this process also works in water gardens. A lot of people think that seeing a layer of algae on the surfaces of rocks is not attractive and has to be removed. Sure, when the biofilm is not removed, you do not see the color of the rocks. However, you do see a healthy ecosystem. We can embrace this concept even more by letting go of the old paradigm that mandates clean pond surfaces. Instead, we should manage our water gardens as the functioning ecosystems we are trying to emulate. ☘

About the Author

The very popular subject of adding water features to a garden is one to which **Jamie Beyer** brings a lot of knowledge and enthusiasm. Jamie is a Lifetime Master Gardener and is founder and past president of the Central Iowa Water

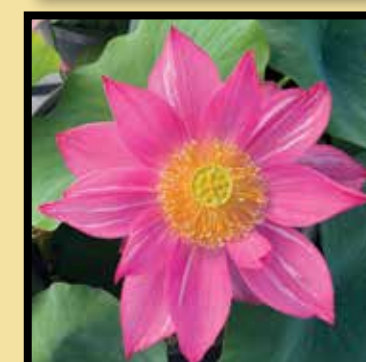


Garden Association. He combines this experience with his master's degree in fish and wildlife biology to become uniquely qualified to be one of the Midwest's foremost experts on the subject. His broad background of fisheries, dynamics of water, wildlife ecology and horticulture gives him impressive credentials.

Jamie frequently speaks and writes on all aspects of water features and water gardening. In addition, he also has a water garden, fountain and pond consulting-installation business, Midwest Waterscapes, through which he provides services to people who want extra help with building a waterscape. He has considerable experience installing ponds, diagnosing water garden problems, teaching classes and helping do-it-yourselfers do it correctly.

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Grassyfork Fisheries, purchased by Ozark Fisheries in 1970, used live hauling trucks before shifting to metal cans.

From Farm to Pond

Tips from a fish farmer on shipping live fish

by **Margaret Cleveland,**
Ozark Fisheries

Being a fourth-generation fish farmer, I grew up on my family's ornamental goldfish and koi farm in rural Missouri. My love of fish was instilled in me as a young girl, and the process of shipping live fish has always fascinated me. My dual understanding of the importance of overall fish health and safely packaging ornamental fish for transit has

evolved significantly over time.

"You Can Ship Live Fish?"

If you keep or sell fish, you likely get them from your local pet shop or garden center, a big box store, a local fish farm ... or perhaps you have them imported from overseas? Time and time again, we get the same response from folks who are unfamiliar with ornamental fish farming. "You can ship live fish?"

I am always perplexed by this question. How



Galvanized metal shipping cans (left) were used to ship live fish on the railroad from the 1920s to 1940s. These buckets were weighed (middle) on scales, as seen in the 1960s. Bob Cramer, former Ozark Fisheries sales manager (right), shows off the old-style cans and new cardboard boxes in 1950.

do people think pet stores and garden centers get their fish? Many people do not realize that while a lot of fish are delivered using live haul trucks, most ornamental fish are transported in cardboard boxes via an overnight delivery service.

Today, there are lots of ways for fish enthusiasts to find and source fish. But what is the best way to safely transport ornamental fish, and how do your fish really travel? While this might initially seem simple, the process is complex, with a lot of moving pieces.

Travel Agents for Fish

For fish farmers, the process starts with spawning and producing high-quality, healthy fish. Farmers take great care in feeding and observing the fish to ensure health and quality. On most fish farms, fish spend most of their time on the farm growing in earthen dirt ponds. When the fish are ready, they are transported from production ponds into shipping facilities. They are then processed by variety, size, and overall quality. This is done by using graders, hand sorting and, in some cases, examining individual fish.

Handling fish can be stressful on them and make them more susceptible to disease issues. It is important to limit any unnecessary handling and take precautionary measures to make the process as low-stress as possible. Shipping team members are diligent in their efforts to keep fish healthy and sellable. Once the koi and goldfish have been separated by size and variety, they are ready to be sold.

Our farm's marketing team jokingly describes our job simply as travel agents for fish. We have one job — we must do our best to choose the fastest, most direct way to get fish from our farm to our customer.

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Assorted goldfish, including common, sara-sas and shubunkin, are ready to ship.

weather conditions to the customer's destination and the proximity to our farms. With that information, our team will pick the most efficient and affordable way to pack your order and ship it to you. Once an order has been completed by our marketing team, it falls back on our shipping departments to safely pack orders. No matter where you source your fish, they have most likely traveled in a box and plastic bag via FedEx, UPS or air freight.

Littoral Logistics

Fish trade and movement in the United States has a long history. While some goods were relatively easy to move across the county, live fish have always had transportation limitations due to the water and oxygen needed to keep them alive. In the early days of fish transport, live haul delivery trucks were most common. This came with its own set of issues because of the limited road and highway systems at that time.

Surprisingly, fish were also commonly transported by railroad in the 1870s through the late 1940s. Fish traveled inside metal cans filled with water and ice blocks placed on top of the can. As the ice blocks melted, the fresh water would percolate down into the container and add oxygen. There were even a few modified railway cars that were made into fish cars to safely hold and move fish across the country.

In the late 1940s, travel by railroad became less reliable, and the use of metal cans limited fish from being shipped via new methods like air freight. With the more widespread use of plastic, new shipping methods were developed. While there were several iterations of shipping fish in boxes, the basics of this method include fish being added with water in an oxygen-inflated plastic bag. That bag is then sealed and shipped inside a corrugated cardboard box. It took many years of testing this method of shipping live fish in a box to determine it was safe enough for both the fish and all the other packages being delivered as well.

Over the years, updates to this shipping method have included using



An Ozark Fisheries employee secures and tapes boxes before shipping.

insulated liners to regulate water temperature during transport. The use of gel ice packs or heat packs along with chemicals to help regulate ammonia or keep fish calm during transport are also sometimes used.

Fish in a Box

The advancement of technology in shipping fish has allowed individuals today a wide range of options to obtain their fish. You can go to your local pet store, visit a local water

garden shop, get your fish direct from a breeder or import fish from abroad. For some in rural areas without access to a local pet shop, finding a reliable source for fish is becoming harder and harder. Due to this, ordering fish online and having them shipped directly to you is becoming a more popular option.

In fact, shipping fish in a cardboard box is now the industry standard of shipping all types of live fish throughout the world, as it has proven to be a much lighter and less expensive shipping method. It has opened up the possibility of shipping live fish via air freight and numerous other markets that previously weren't available to the aquaculture industry.

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Ozark Fisheries' Missouri farm (left) has over 300 dirt-bottom ponds used to raise goldfish and koi. Red fantail goldfish (right) are raised here.

Even with the difficulties and uncertainties of flight availability over the past couple of years, shipping fish via air freight continues today to be one of the most common avenues for shipping live fish.

The U.S. Postal Service was widely used for a brief period, but it has proven to be too slow and unreliable to be trusted with live fish. Delivery services like UPS, FedEx and DHL are the most popular overnight delivery options in North America.

Buyers Beware!

When bringing in new fish, always do your research! Check the reviews and ask the supplier questions. Did the supplier take extra care in limiting the overall stress of the koi or goldfish? What steps does their team take to provide a healthy product?

While the weight of shipping high-quality fish falls on the shoulders of your fish supplier, it is important that you are prepared to receive an order.

Have you prepared your system to receive fish? It is best to have your system set up and cycling for at least a week or two before adding any live fish. If you already have an established system with fish, make sure to quarantine any new fish before adding them.

Are your weather conditions acceptable to receive fish? Whether you are

going to pick them up locally or you are ordering online and having them delivered, make sure you are doing so in cooler conditions. Adding new fish to your system in cooler weather is less stressful on the fish during transport and in the acclimation process upon arrival.

How can you minimize the stress level of the fish you're purchasing? Using local fish source options when possible, like local pet stores or water gardens, is a great option. For wholesale ordering, purchasing direct from a U.S. breeder or fish farm will decrease handling and stress for the fish.


Delivery Instructions

If you are purchasing from a supplier that ships their product, make sure your fish are going to be shipped for overnight delivery. Fish that are packaged for multiple days are most susceptible to stress-related health issues.

If you are purchasing fish locally, do so in the coolest part of the day. If you need fish in the warmer months, pick the coolest day of the week to receive your order. If you are shipping in an order, think about having it shipped to your local UPS or FedEx center. Some of these centers offer pick-up options as early as 9:00 a.m.

Make sure to track your shipment

so you know when it will arrive. The shipper should include acclimation instructions, but it is always a good idea to do your own research on how to acclimate the specific type of fish you are receiving before they arrive.

Whether you purchase fish direct from a fish farm, a local pet store or garden center, it takes great care and teamwork for your fish to safely travel to you. 

About the Author

Margaret Cleveland is a fourth-generation fish farmer at Ozark Fisheries. She grew up on her family's 96-year-old fish farm in rural Missouri and then studied fisheries and



wildlife at the University of Missouri. She spent three years abroad in South Korea before rejoining Ozark Fisheries in 2018 on the sales and marketing team. She also serves on the board of the Missouri Aquaculture Association. Margaret loves sharing about aquaculture and fish farming on Ozark Fisheries' Instagram and Facebook pages. Search @ozarkfisheries to follow along. www.ozarkfisheries.com



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The fish arrive from Mat McCann.

Courtyard koi pond for a luxury desert community

SERIES:
Best Pond Practices

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

by Kent Wallace,
Living Water Solutions

In 2021, I met with architect Michael Gardner, owner of Studio G Architecture, to discuss an upcoming courtyard pond in a development called Ascaya here in Las Vegas. The plans were for a

contemporary home with a courtyard pond just inside the front entry gate. The original plans were for a pond of approximately 20,000 gallons, but that would require more space than the clients were willing to give up. The second redesign was 12,000 to 15,000 gallons, with the third and final design at approximately 10,000



gallons. The pond was to share some of the space with a reflecting pond just to the right of the entrance steps leading through the courtyard and into the house. A patio area is between the pond and house with landscape filling the balance of the area surrounding the pond.

Filtration Design

The equipment is located on the south side of the house in an area shared with the pool equipment. Originally the plan was to run all the piping under the house in a direct line to the equipment through a concrete culvert pipe, but the final decision was to run the piping through the entry around the front of the house and up the side to the filtration system. This added about 400 feet to the length of the gravity-flow lines, but it had to be done.

The pond is a slight L-shape consisting of a square area with a 5-foot-wide leg extending toward the entry walkway. The steps for egress are at the end of this leg. Anthony and Sylvan pools handled the construction, including the plumbing to the filter pit and back. Two of my 4-inch-by-4-inch vertical pond return drains connect to a 275-gallon tote radial separator through two of the six 4-inch lines. This water gravity flows into a vertical air driven dilution reactor (ADDR) with a 6-inch airlift in the center sending the water back to the pond through two more of the 4-inch pipes leading to the centers of the



The main plumbing (top, left) is stubbed up from the pond. The drain (middle, left) and skimmer are laid out. The side and in-floor returns (bottom, left) are shown with the second skimmer. Shotcrete (right) and edge work are being completed.

vertical pond return drains.

Two shelf-mounted Aqua-Niche in-pond skimmers and one mid-water drain flow through three 2 ½-inch pipes to the inlet side of a W. Lim Wave 1 ¼ Horsepower pump



Gravity flow plumbing leads to filtration.

through three 2-inch ball valves for control and maintenance. The Wave 1 sends water to a W. Lim EZR up-flow sand and gravel filter. The water travels down to the bottom through an 87-watt flow free down-flow 6-inch ultraviolet light that is mounted in the center of the filter. The EZR filter is installed with 12 inches of head above the water line of the pond and is gravity flow through the final two of the six 4-inch lines back to the pond. At the pond, these two 4-inch pipes are divided into four 2-inch in-floor returns and seven 1 ½-inch side returns. By dividing the 4-inch pipes into these smaller pipes, I can eliminate valves, as the returns become self-balancing for the most part. Refer to my previous article titled “Fractal Plumbing for Pond Circulation Management” in the July-August 2015 issue for reference.

In all, six 4-inch pipes, three 2 ½-inch pipes and two 1-inch pipes for the bottom drain aerators were all buried in the trench traveling around the front of the house.

Mind the Gap

Once the shotcrete shell was parged with Bond Kote for a smoother finish, Paul Parszik of







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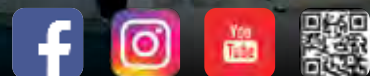
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The ADDR features an internal airlift.

Artizan Aquatics arrived to coat the surface with polyurea.

One issue we had was mechanically clamping the upper edge of the polyurea where the poured patio was to hang over the edge of the pond. This left no easy way to mechanically clamp the top edge of the polyurea. The patio needed to be poured before the polyurea to protect the surface from all the

One issue we had was mechanically clamping the upper edge of the polyurea where the poured patio was to hang over the edge of the pond. This left no easy way to mechanically clamp the top edge of the polyurea.

effects of pouring concrete, and the support for the patio edge needed to be secured to the concrete shell—which would be difficult, if not impossible once the polyurea was installed.

The solution was to create a small gap with a removable spacer about 3/8 inches thick and about 1/2 to 3/4 inches deep between the top of the pond shell beam and the underside of the patio that could be removed after the forms came

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All the filtration (left) is connected. The Bond Kote surface (right) is finished.



off. Once the Bond Kote was applied, a small grinder was used to clean out the gap for polyurea. This gap allowed Parszik to create a thick upper collar of polyurea that would resist delamination over time.

Immediately after this was complete, the upper 6 inches of the polyurea

surrounding the pond edge was coated with Laticrete 9235, acting as a surface to bond to the tile edge. Tile mastic won't adhere to polyurea, but Laticrete 9235 will. The tile can be attached to this surface because Laticrete is made specifically for a variety of cementitious tile mastic compounds.

Power Play

All three of the filters, (prefilter, ADDR, and sand and gravel filter), are installed below ground on a 6-inch-thick slab with rebar reinforcement. This is because, in total, they are approximately 975 gallons and weigh just over 8,000 lbs. That amount of weight must



With the polyurea and tile edge (left) installed, a skimmer (right) is mounted in the corner shelf.



be stabilized on a platform to prevent movement or settling over time. Three Medo 80-lpm air pumps to power the system were installed on a shelf just above the filters. The first air pump powers the water movement in the ADDR biofilter; the second is for the 6-inch airlift; and the third is for the air rings on top of the bottom drain air domes. The bottom drain air pump has a manifold with two small ball valves to balance the flow between the two air rings and is operated by a timer.

Because of the incredible distance of the gravity-flow piping, the inlet manifold on the skimmer-midwater circuit was modified with two more inlets. Each of these were connected to the top cleanout extensions from the 4-inch bottom drainpipes. This proved to be essential in purging those long lines of air so they would flow. Once the skimmer and midwater pipes were purged by the pump and free of air, the valves for the bottom drains could be slowly opened, purging the pipes of air mechanically. The other 4-inch return lines didn't need this because they each had 1 foot of head to create enough flow to self-purge. The bottom drainpipes to the prefilter had no natural head to purge the air.

Coast-to-Coast Koi

The owner's koi for this project had been quarantined for approximately a

year and a half while the house was under construction. Mat McCann of Beni Hanna Nishikigoi in New Jersey took care of them and shipped those — plus a few new additions — out to Las Vegas after the long wait with no issues in the transport.

This was a long project with some difficult technical issues along the way. With the fish happily out of quarantine, it makes it all worthwhile in the end. ☺

About the Author

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



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

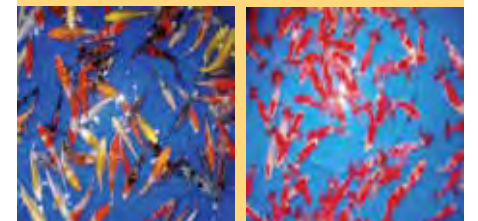
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Hot in Cleveland

Atlantic-OASE Professional Conference returns in person

Demi Fortuna & Caitlyn Winkle,
Atlantic-OASE

On Sep. 14, 2022, contractors, distributors and pond industry professionals reunited for the sixth annual Atlantic-OASE Professional Conference, face-to-face once again. The conference also offered participants a good measure of recreation and networking.

Medal Play

The event began with the shotgun start

of the Golf Outing Scramble at Gleneagles Golf Club. After the spirited four-person, scramble-style event, teams met up with the rest of the attendees at a meet-and-greet at the hotel before heading to dinner at Blue Canyon Kitchen and Tavern.

During the outdoor cocktail hour, Jeff Weemhoff, president of Atlantic-OASE, announced the winning first and second-place teams before presenting the APC awards, which are given to individuals or companies both for their work in the field and their contributions to the industry. The Presidential Award recognized

George Mihalchick and Susan Perpetua of Ponds by George, Southampton, Pennsylvania.

Next up, Lloyd Lightsey the Pond Monster, the first recipient of the Monster Award, which recognizes those who go consistently go above and beyond, presented the fourth Monster Award to Dan Johanson and Melissa Devine of Focal Point Features, Austin, Texas.

Weemhoff then presented the third and final APC award of the evening, the Atlantic-OASE Professional Contractor of the Year. This year's APCY recipi-



ent is a local contractor from Twinsburg, Ohio, Mike Bulone of Bulone Brothers Landscaping, who was honored both for his extraordinary vision and execution of his large and impressive water features.

After cocktails and ceremonies, the group moved inside to enjoy a great dinner while networking with new and old friends and colleagues before a full day of water feature training on Thursday.

Pond Ed

After breakfast and company announcements from Jeff Weemhoff at the hotel, participants separated into groups for morning class sessions. Half of the attendees boarded a shuttle to Atlantic-OASE headquarters, while the rest remained at the hotel to choose any four courses among the following: Pond & Lake Management, Water Feature Sales Add-ons, PondoVac Hacks, How to Get Business Leads, Clear Water Guarantee Pond System and Introduction to Indoor Aquatics & biOrbs.

Sean Bell, Atlantic-OASE's south-east regional sales manager, hosted a Demystifying the Clear Water Pond System class, combining old and new techniques and equipment to keep ponds cleaner



and clearer than ever thought possible. Kyle Weemhoff, southwest regional sales manager, presented Diving Into Pond and Lake Management, discussing treatments, aeration and management of large ponds



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and lakes. Jay Weemhoff, north-east regional sales manager, led Add-ons to Your Water Feature Sales, presenting all the different add-ons to new and existing water feature projects Atlantic-OASE has to offer. Peter Ferber, customer service and tech support, and Gary Miller, quality control, hosted PondoVac Hacks, Tips and Tricks, loaded with helpful advice on OASE PondoVacs. Adam Raabe, OASE aquatics category manager, gave us a look into OASE's biOrb and Indoor Aquatics aquariums with his Bringing Water Indoors: Intro to Indoor Aquatics class. And lastly, B.J. Linger and Motel McCready from Outdoor Network Services advised attendees How to Get Consistent Leads for Your Pond Business.

A short bus ride away, three class sessions were held at Atlantic-OASE headquarters in each of the morning and afternoon class blocks. These included closer looks at the new products of 2022 and a first look at what's new for 2023, hosted by Brandon Dwyer, VP product development, and James Lavery, national sales manager, in the Atlantic-OASE Training Room.

Explore the SandBox was a first chance for many to see the

hands-on SandBox training facility. Hosted by Jim Chubb, training manager, and Demi Fortuna, director of product information, the session showcased systems and products in action, from fountains, formal spillways and water entertainment, to pond-free and water garden displays, including the new, compact Eco-Rise system, aura vases and bowls in hand-hammered brass. The trainers also announced the fall-winter training schedule, with beginner and intermediate classes in the SandBox. The final session at headquarters was Digitally Connecting to Your Water Features with OASE EGC Products, taught by Todd Rosendahl, northwest regional sales manager.

A Face-to-Face Feat

After classes Thursday afternoon, two luxury buses carried attendees to Cleveland for dinner at Collision Bend Brewery on the Cuyahoga River to close out the conference. Attendees posted numerous positive reviews, citing the depth and wealth of the information, as well as great appreciation for tips, tricks and the opportunity to engage with colleagues and trainers in person once again. **CS**



Contractor of the Year
Mike Bulone



Presidential Award
George Milhalchick
& Susan Perpetua



Monster Award
Dan Johanson & Melissa Devine



Microbe-Lift Products Unveils All New Packaging

Microbe-Lift is excited to introduce their brand new Legacy Koi & Goldfish food and Spring Summer Cleaner packaging! Their Top Quality Feed in small, medium and large sizes will now be sold in new pouches, and the Spring Summer Cleaner will come in a box. This redesign was focused on creating a more eco-friendly footprint to reduce plastic waste. Ecological Laboratories Inc., the producer of Microbe-Lift, continues to reinvest into the pond and water garden market to support you and your aquatic success!



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Fitz's Fish Ponds Returns to Japan for Fall Harvest Trip

Fitz and the Fitz's Fish Ponds Team traveled back to Japan from Oct. 16 to Nov. 16, 2022 for the fall harvest. It was an amazing experience for the team to go back into the mountains without the Covid restrictions. Although there was added intimacy in getting individual attention with the breeders during the Covid pandemic, it was great to see the mountains buzzing again with enthusiasts.

We had 15 customers make the journey from the U.S. all the way to Japan; for 12 of them, it was their first trip. Our delegation included Tom Smith from Garden State Koi; Greg Wittstock, Brian Helfrich and Ed "The Pond Professor" Beaulieu from Aquascape; Jaak Harju from Atlantis Water Gardens; John Adams from Modern Design Aquascaping; Ralph Bizard from Pondscapes, AZ; and Diego Asturias from Fontana Water Features.



We visited more than 20 breeders, each specializing in a different breed of koi, and harvested six mud ponds. Among the breeders we visited were Shintaro, Marudo, Hiroseji, Ikarashi, Sekiguchi, Marusei, Maruhiro, Marusho, Yamasan, Hiroi, Koda, Kase, Shinoda, Marusada, Iwashita, Torazo and Hirashin.

Not only did the team and our customers have a great time in the mud ponds and visiting some of the largest koi facilities in the word, but we also had a great time experiencing all Japan has to offer with their great restaurants, steak houses and, of course, fantastic sushi.

During the trip, we sold and sourced some of the nicest koi in the entire world for our customers. Some customers took advantage of Azukari while in Japan. This translates to "under custody" or "under supervision." These customers bought koi that will be left in the care of the breeder or dealer in Japan. They will be able to go back in the future to harvest the koi they bought and see how much it grows. We sourced both smaller and larger koi — one in particular was 105 cm. That koi actually won the award for jumbo koi at the Nogyosai Koi Show.

After staying in Japan for approximately a month, the paperwork now begins to ensure all koi that are bought and sold are documented. Back at the FFP Farm, this means we need to start prepping for the next shipment to come in. The koi bought on this trip will be available to reserve on our website within the next few weeks. Shipments are scheduled in January and early February 2023. They will then be quarantined until they are ready to go. At FFP we have our own greenhouse dedicated to quarantining fish from a new shipment so the koi can be monitored and well rested.

FFP is excited to share that KoiTrips is back up and running in full swing. Now that Japan has opened its borders, we are looking forward to helping more customers travel with us. If you are interested in joining us in the future, be sure to contact us or visit the website, www.koitrips.com.



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Outdoor Network Services Launches New Online Marketing Services for Outdoor Service Businesses

Outdoor Network Services (Previously P.O.N.D. Services) has upgraded its online marketing services to include a new online locator and advanced website design for its online marketing services.

"There are a lot of contractors in this industry who try to manage and design their own website and online marketing. I always ask our potential customers if they are a pond builder or a website designer," says Outdoor Network Services Founder B.J. Linger.

"Too often, contractors try to build their website and manage their online marketing themselves because of financial reasons or the challenges involved with relaying their business services and story to a development team. The problem is that the knowledge, time and energy involved with managing online marketing can be overwhelming and distracts them from focusing on their business."

Linger and Outdoor Network services co-owner Jeff Duggins have more than 25 years of combined

experience in the pond and water feature industry. Their knowledge of running a business in the industry gives them a strategic advantage over other web development and online marketing companies.

"Our proprietary local business locator for outdoor service businesses, website design services, paid advertising management and online reputation management services is specifically designed to connect outdoor service professionals with homeowners seeking their services." Duggins says.

"Through integrated online listing services and cutting-edge, secure, responsive website designs, we guarantee that our customer's business shows up when people search online for the services they offer in their service areas. There are no tricks or gimmicks. We simply unite homeowners with quality outdoor service businesses."

Learn more at <https://marketing.outdoor-network.services/>

Detroit Free Press Names The Pond Guy Winner of the Top Workplaces 2022 Award

The Pond Guy has been awarded a Top Workplaces 2022 honor by The Detroit Free Press. The confidential survey uniquely measures 15 culture drivers that are critical to the success of any organization, including direction, values, appreciation and execution, just to name a few. The awards are based solely on employee feedback gathered through a third-party survey administered by employee engagement technology partner Energage LLC.



companies, especially because it comes authentically from their employees," said Eric Rubino, Energage CEO. "The results speak for themselves. The Pond Guy scored in the 96th percentile compared to other companies in the category."

Over the past five years, The Pond Guy has steadily grown from 80 to almost 200 employees. The company focused on its employees and positive company culture during this incredible growth, and it shows. When asked what three words best describe company culture, survey respondents most often wrote: Tribe, Positive and Inclusive.



New Aquascape Faux Basalt Columns

Aquascape's new Faux Basalt Column Fountains are molded from real basalts and handmade in the U.S.A. using a blend of fiberglass, resin and real stone to provide an extremely realistic and durable fountain. Real basalt is extremely heavy and can be difficult to install. Due to the lightweight nature of the Faux Basalt Columns, installation is quick and easy. Each column includes a sturdy base, making it easy to secure in place. The base can be covered with decorative gravel.

Faux Basalt Columns can be used individually or grouped together for an impressive fountain display. Available in heights of 18", 24", 30", 36" and 42". Columns can be purchased individually, in groups of three or five, or purchased as a kit with three columns that includes everything needed to create a realistic-looking stone fountain. Visit aquascapeinc.com for more information or call 866.877.6637 to place an order.



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Atlantic-OASE Introductory & Intermediate Water Feature Training

Join Atlantic-OASE for two-day hands-on training events at the Atlantic-OASE headquarters in Aurora, Ohio. Designed specifically for the professional contractor, these sessions showcase all Atlantic-OASE has to offer. Learn about water feature products, best installation practices and the profitability of water features. Choose from two different sessions based on the description that best fits your level of experience. With a few dates still available during the winter season, learn how to incorporate a new revenue stream to your business. Introductory and intermediate courses are available.

Our introductory session is made for contractors who have never installed or have minimal experience installing water features and are looking to incorporate a new revenue stream to their business through basic water feature installation of fountains, formal spillways and small waterfalls. Available dates: Jan. 17-19 and March 7-9, 2023.

The intermediate session is for contractors who have installed basic water features, such as fountains or formal spillways, and looking to learn more about sizing, specing, maintenance and installing ponds and waterfalls. Available dates: Feb. 7-9, 2023. For more info, visit www.atlantic-oase.com/training.

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