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SORCERY IN THE *Secret Garden*

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p.40

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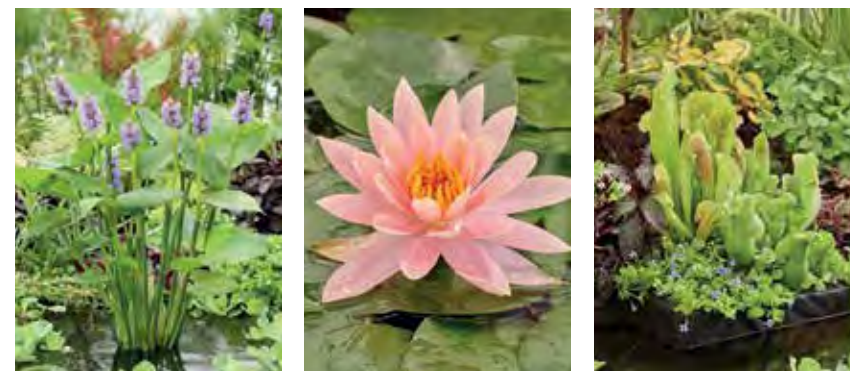


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Upcoming Events

2026

May 22-24

Greater Louisville Koi & Goldfish Show
KYNA Antique Koi Club
Louisville, KY
<https://louisvillekoiclub.com>

June 5-7

Heartland Koi Show
Hardscape Materials Inc.
Bixby, OK
www.eventbrite.com/e/heartland-koi-classic-2026-tickets-1983654822974

June 27-28

Pond-O- Rama
St. Louis Water Garden Society
St. Louis, MO
<https://slwgs.org/pond-o-rama/>

July 25-August 15

KC Water Garden Society Tour
KC Water Garden Society
Shawnee, OK
www.kcwatergardens.com

August 15-18

Pondemonium
Aqualand
St. Charles, IL
www.aquascapeinc.com/professionals/pondemonium

August 18-21

IWGS Symposium
St. Louis, MO
<https://iwgs.org/2026-symposium-stlouis>

August 21-22

Koi Fest 2026
Fitz's Fish Ponds Farm
Milford, NJ
www.fitzfishponds.com/koi-fest-event-2026

September 4-6

Miami Koi Show
The Koi Venue
Miami, FL
www.thekoivenue.com

October 21-23

Hardscapes North America
Kentucky Exposition Center,
Louisville, KY
www.hardscapena.com/

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Publisher's Perspective

Magic in the Making



There's a point in the season when everything starts to click—where creativity meets science, and the planning, conversations and ideas begin to take shape. That was especially clear at this year's Water Garden Expo. In "Water Garden Expo Round-Up" (p. 60), I reflect on an event that delivered not only education and vendor innovation, but meaningful conversations—the kind that

happens over meals, between sessions and long after the day ends.

That same thread carries throughout this issue, beginning with "Building Beyond Borders" (p. 8), where Jonathan Zumeta shares how an unexpected opportunity led to an international pond build in Belize—one shaped by adaptability, teamwork and cultural connection. On a much larger scale, Larry Carnes explores what's possible when engineering and nature align in "Land of Natura" (p. 16), detailing the creation of the world's largest naturally filtered waterpark.

Growth in this industry doesn't always require scale—it can start small. In "Tub Ponds" (p. 20), Dr. Ted Coletti highlights how accessible water gardening can be, offering a gateway for new hobbyists to engage with the craft. That same idea of balance between science and application continues in "Koi Nutrition: Feeding for Healthy Metabolism" (p. 29), where Rajat Agarwal connects water temperature, digestion and nutrition to overall fish health.

Of course, creativity relies on strong fundamentals. In "How to Choose the Right Pump" (p. 35), Ron Maurice breaks down the technical decisions that ensure long-term performance and efficiency in any water feature. From there, imagination takes center stage in "Sorcery in the Secret Garden" (p. 40), where Mr. Underhill blends storytelling and design to show how intentional landscapes can create immersive, emotional experiences.

"From Eggs to Ecosystems" (p. 48), provides an inside look at Kloubec Koi Farm, where everyday elements come together in unexpected ways. And in "The Power of the Pond Edge" (p. 55), Joe Summers reminds us that what happens at the margins—those often-overlooked shallow zones—plays a critical role in water quality, stability and

overall ecosystem health.

Taken together, these stories reflect what defines our industry—balance. A constant interplay between design and science, where creativity is supported by technical precision. Between imagination and structure, where bold ideas are grounded in systems that perform. And between large-scale innovation and everyday application, where the same principles that shape world-class projects also apply to the smallest water features.

As the season unfolds, stay connected to that momentum. Lean into the conversations, the ideas and the opportunities to grow. Because what we build matters—but the way it all comes together, through people, process and purpose, is what truly defines our impact.

Until the next splash,
Lauren Nolan
Publisher, POND Trade Magazine

PONDTRADE MAGAZINE

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SCAN TO SUBMIT YOUR CATEGORY VOTES

Final awards categories will be announced in July of 2026.



BUILDING BEYOND BORDERS

Inside an international
pond build in Belize

by **Jonathan Zumeta,**
Aqua-Springs Texas

It all started with a phone call. Our distributor had received an unexpected inquiry, a call from Belize. On the other end was a man named Stuart, asking about pond materials for a proposed project in a private community called Blue Creek. The questions quickly grew more complex than product advice alone could answer. Within minutes, our distributor realized this wasn't a routine material order. It was the beginning of something much larger, and we were the right team to take it on.

At Aqua-Springs Texas, we've built our company around collaboration. Our core team isn't made up of traditional employees. Instead, we rely on a foundation of trusted Certified Aquascape Contractors, professional friends who share our standards, skills and commitment to excellence. Together, we've tackled major projects across the U.S., from New York to Wisconsin to Texas. But this time, our model of teamwork was about to cross borders for the first time.



Top: Our team arrives in Belize via private flight, marking the beginning of an ambitious international build. - Middle Left: Planning and preparation takes place. Middle Right: What appeared to be soft ground quickly proved otherwise, as excavation exposed dense limestone just inches below the surface. Bottom: With groundwork underway, the team begins shaping the site, setting the stage for liner installation and stone placement.

Before the Shovel Hit the Ground

When I first spoke to Stuart, I assumed he was the client. He wasn't. He was the local project manager and horticulturalist for the Blue Creek community, a quiet, tight-knit Mennonite settlement deep in the Belizean jungle. Stuart was the one cultivating plants for the property and helping the homeowner bring a vision to life: a small pond and stream that would flow naturally off the cliffside of their estate.

As passionate professionals, we not only immediately understood the dream, but also the challenge. The project demanded not just proper materials but proper experience, tools and precision techniques. This wasn't something that could be managed remotely or built by an untrained crew, no matter how motivated. It needed a specialized team on-site, boots on the ground, working hand in hand with local labor.

That's when the idea of an international build stopped being a dream and became a necessity.

Planning, Logistics and Early Wins

Planning the Belize build began months before our private flight. Early on, we established two non-negotiables: the project had to be logistically possible, and it had to be built to our professional standards. Stuart's family owns and operates what we would call "Walmart," a general store that regularly received a shipping container from Houston, Texas. That single detail became our lifeline. It meant we could safely transport every piece of product and every pound of liner, underlayment and bio-mechanical filtration equipment directly to Blue Creek on the next scheduled container.

Still, one thought lingered in the back of my mind: If we forgot even one critical part, there was no quick fix.

The second logistical blessing came from the homeowner himself.



From initial prep to liner placement and heavy equipment work, the crew moves through each phase with precision and coordination, steadily bringing the pond's structure to life.

Recognizing the scope of what lay ahead, he personally offered to fly our team from Texas to Belize on his private jet. That gesture wasn't just convenience, it was commitment. It showed the client understood what we were bringing to the table and why this project required true professionals.

Arrival in Blue Creek

When we touched down in Belize, the humid air hit like a wave. Blue Creek sits in a lush, tropical region, hot, green and alive with sound. The

welcome we received was immediate and warm. Stuart's team and the homeowner's family treated us like honored guests. We were given full access to meals, transportation and even supplies from the local hardware store just half a mile away.

We quickly realized that we weren't just building a water feature for one homeowner. We were building something for the entire community. As the homeowner himself said one evening, "Everyone here will come up that hill to see this pond."

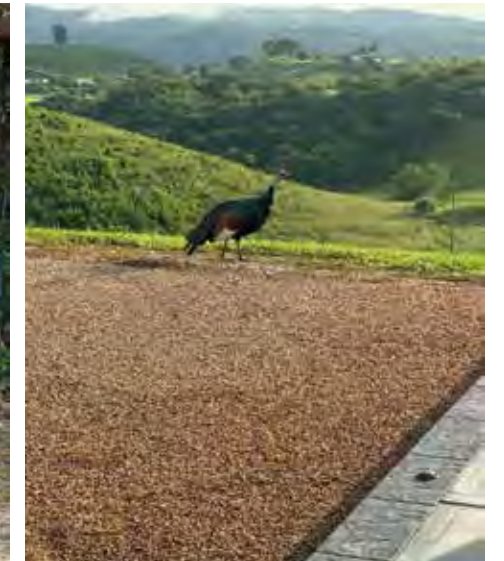
And he was right. In a place where word travels fast, "the Americans building a koi pond off the cliff" became the talk of Blue Creek.

Breaking Ground: Rock, Sweat and Teamwork

The project site greeted us with one major obstacle, limestone. What looked like soft soil on the surface turned out to be a solid sheet of rock just inches down. Every expansion, every inch of depth had to be fought for with jackhammers. Fortunately,



Through each phase of construction, the site transforms—culminating in a finished space that reflects the full vision of the project.



Top: The team visited the Mayan ruins during a rainy day, capturing a powerful moment that reflects the balance between work and culture. Bottom: Wildlife, including toucans and peacocks, roams freely—enhancing the natural beauty of Blue Creek in Belize.

Stuart's team had heavy equipment on hand and was quick to provide additional tools.

In the U.S., we typically rely on hydraulic excavators and compact loaders. In Belize, we worked with a 1970s-era mini excavator and a telehandler, older machines that required finesse and patience but got the job done. In that moment, our experience and adaptability mattered more than our usual technology.

From the first hammer strike, one thing became clear: this project would take more than four or five days. That was the timeline locals initially expected. In reality, it took both our teams, five trained contractors and five Belizean workers, 10 full days of dawn-to-dusk effort to bring the design to life.

What started as two separate crews

quickly became one. We dug side by side, set stones shoulder to shoulder and shared sweat, stories and laughter across cultures and languages. By the end, we weren't just colleagues. We were family.

Challenges and Small Victories

In a place like Blue Creek, every small success felt monumental. We overcame equipment failures, adapted to weather swings and found creative ways to work within the local supply chain. Our rhythm became simple: work until the weather stops you, then use that pause to recharge.

About a third of the way through the project, a tropical downpour hit. After confirming it wasn't a brief shower, we called the day for rest. But

instead of staying in, we explored. That day, our teams visited nearby Mayan ruins, walking the ancient stones, learning the history and experiencing the spirit of Belize firsthand. It was a day of cultural connection and reflection that reenergized us for the final push.

Living the Experience

No international story is complete without its unforgettable moments. Between long workdays, we were invited into the local way of life, swimming in an ice-cold natural aquifer pool, hunting alligators in the rice fields at night and driving through the jungle hills searching for jaguars. One night, we actually found one, a massive cat perched 100 feet up in a tree, its eyes reflecting our lights like



The group joins together for an evening dinner. The locals and visiting crew combined with our team symbolize the connection felt throughout the whole build.

twin embers in the darkness.

Every morning, toucans flew overhead. Wild pigs roamed below. Tarantulas, frogs and iguanas were just part of the scenery. It was raw, wild and beautiful, the kind of environment that reminds you just how small you are in the world.

The Human Side of the Build

The work bonded us deeply with the people of Blue Creek. We shared breakfast, lunch and dinner together. We played dominoes in the evenings. We listened to stories about their families, farms and faith.

By the end of those 10 days, the crew from Aqua-Springs Texas, 4D Exteriorscapes and Sunrise Aquatics had built much more than a pond. We had built relationships, ones that went beyond language or borders. When we left, we didn't just leave behind a water feature. We left behind friends.



The Result

The finished pond and stream were nothing short of breathtaking, a natural oasis perched on the cliffside, seamlessly blending with the landscape. The sound of water cascading down the limestone echoed through the property, attracting birds and wildlife and transforming the entire hillside into a living, breathing ecosystem.

For the Blue Creek community, it became a local landmark. For us, it became proof that passion, collaboration and the right team can overcome any logistical or environmental challenge, even 1,500 miles from home.

Final Reflections

This article isn't about selling international projects. It's about understanding what they demand, logistically, mentally and professionally, and deciding if you're truly ready.

Working abroad forces you to adapt, to trust your partners and to lean on experience rather than convenience. You have to plan obsessively and still be ready to improvise. You have to respect the culture you enter and the people you work alongside.

If I could sum it up in one sentence, it would be this: "Building beyond borders isn't just about distance. It's about growth."

Would we do it again?

Without a doubt. The feeling of completing an international project, and building friendships that cross borders, is unmatched. Every trip like this reminds us why we do what we do: to create something lasting, both in stone and in human connection. And one day, when we return to Belize, it won't only be to see the water feature we built. It will be to visit the friends we made along the way. ☘

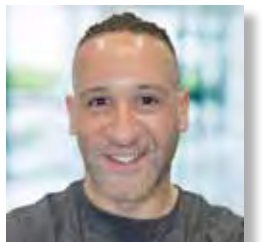


Top: The crew pauses for a photo at the completed project—a moment of pride that reflects the work accomplished and the dedication behind it. Bottom Right: Completed pond build at dusk.

About the Author

Jonathan Zumeta,

co-owner of Aqua-Springs Texas with a Northwood University International Business Degree brings a fresh perspective to the water feature industry—pairing a business-minded approach with a growing passion for the naturalistic environments and artistic expression behind each project. While relatively new to the field, he's proud to contribute to a craft that merges nature, design, and technical precision into one cohesive experience.



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Land of Natura

Engineering the world's largest naturally filtered waterpark

by **Larry Carnes**,
Reflections Water Gardens

Located in the south-central part of the state, the Wisconsin Dells has long carried the title of Waterpark Capital of the World, earned through its numerous aquatic attractions that offer similar experiences in style and design. But a different vision, called Land of Natura, departs from the status quo by focusing on nature and the surrounding natural environment.

Our clients—Adam, David and Rick Makowski of Natura Destinations—envisioned an experience that traded chlorine for biological filtration. Their vision became the Land of Natura, which opened for its first summer in 2023.

Today, the project stands as the largest naturally filtered water park in the world. It also was recently honored with a Silver Award from Landscape Illinois. Anchoring the destination is a five-acre, 20-foot-deep natural swim-



The natural swimming pond features shallow beach entry, a small central island for lounging and natural stonework for sitting and conversation. The stonework also defines the different swimming zones.

ming pond that seamlessly blends high-energy recreation with sophisticated technical design.

Achieving pristine water quality on such a massive scale required engineering a system capable of handling the heavy biological load of thousands of annual vacationers. It also had to maintain the aesthetic and ecological integrity of a natural body of water. Reflections Water Gardens was invited to join the project as technical consultant.

Innovative Infrastructure

We were tasked with advising on the implementation of an innovative, chemical-free filtration and circulation system. In this role, we managed the sourcing, filtration and circulation requirements necessary to keep the five-acre basin clean without synthetic additives. Owners of the project, the Makowskis, served as developers and designers. This level of specialization was critical to the project, ensuring the ambitious scale of the waterpark remained functional and safe for public use and was developed according to the initial vision.

The project got underway with significant foundational work. Construction crews positioned heavy concrete counterweights across the site. These anchors are essential for the stability of the water park's centerpiece: an immense, custom inflatable obstacle course. Because the inflatables are subjected to constant movement and high winds, the foundational anchoring system had to be robust. In-ground weights ensure safety and stability, locking the recreational elements firmly in place.

Site preparation also involved transforming the landscape to accommodate the massive pond. Synchronized construction repurposed materials and ensured that the supporting infrastructure would be ready by the opening deadline. Material for a half-moon sand beach, for example, was meticulously formed as the basin for the natural swimming pond was created. While this earthwork progressed, the precast concrete shell of the guest amenities building rose opposite the water feature.

Material Scarcity

Technical challenges that threatened the project's timeline emerged early in the construction phase. Widespread material scarcity during the coronavirus pandemic severely impacted the availability of PVC and pond liners. This delay forced the team into a period of rigorous engineering adaptation.

Through collaborative efforts, we developed creative workarounds to keep the project on schedule despite supply chain constraints. We simply had to be strategic with the resources we could secure.

The resulting biofilter system is a marvel of scale and material management, utilizing a full acre of liner to contain the filtration beds. To create the necessary surface area for beneficial bacteria to thrive and treat the water, the design incorporates 11,000 reservoir cubes and more than 4,900 tons of gravel. This massive biological engine is what allows the natural pond to operate without chemical intervention.



Top: Concrete counterweights are carefully positioned across the site. This foundational work anchors the water park's inflatable elements, ensuring safety and stability for Land of Natura's visitors. - Bottom: Aerial view of the site under construction. (Courtesy of CRS4REC, crs4rec.com/resources/project/case-study-the-land-of-natura/)

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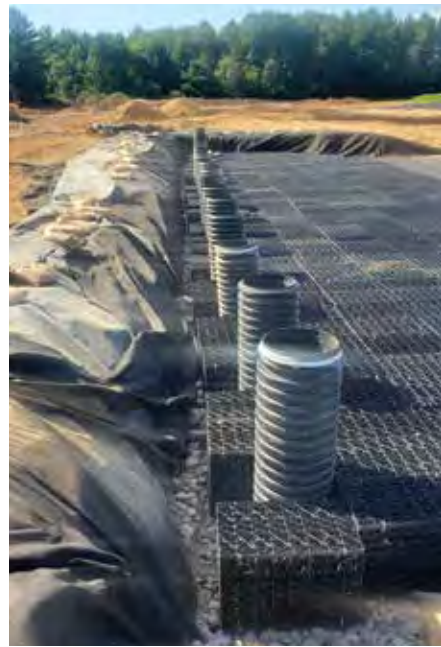
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Corrugated intake pipes help move water to the pump and filtration system. This integrated design optimizes water quality and system efficiency.

Filtration Mechanics

Filtration is driven by a complex storage system designed for maximum efficiency. Reservoir cubes create the intake bay. The pond's primary filtration system manages subsurface filtration and storage, allowing water to be drawn through the gravel media where biological processes strip away impurities. Corrugated intake pipes facilitate the movement of water from these bays to the pump and filtration systems.

This integrated design optimizes water quality and ensures the entire five-acre body of water remains in constant motion. To ensure reliable water access and circulation across the expansive site, the team routed 8,500 linear feet of 8-inch PVC through challenging, uneven terrain.


This plumbing network ensures that even the furthest reaches of the pond receive filtered, oxygenated water. Of course, all the infrastructure remains hidden beneath the water's surface, allowing the natural beauty of the pond to remain the primary focus for guests.

Opportunity Knocks

The aesthetic design of the pond balances recreation with naturalism. Boulders are strategically placed throughout the pond for purpose and definition.

Stone borders define a swim channel while directing water flow and reinforcing the technical circulation requirements of the naturally filtered system. Boulders in deeper swimming areas create a controlled environment for advanced skill levels.

A shallow beach mimics a natural lake shore and provides easy access. Out in the water, a small island provides space for lounging and a resting place for swimmers. Stonework also serves as seating areas, encouraging conversation and interaction among guests relaxing in the water.

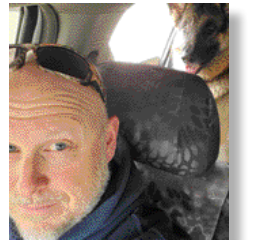
Land of Natura demonstrates that chemical-free systems can scale to meet the intense demands of high-traffic public destinations. Most importantly, it offers the naturally filtered water experience to those who may not have it at home, inspiring them to create their own backyard escapes. 



Natural stone borders define the swim channel. This feature directs water flow and separates deeper swimming areas from the shallow beach.

About the Author

Larry Carnes is founder, owner and president of Reflections Water Gardens. With more than 30 years of experience in the industry, Larry has transitioned from hands-on contractor to visionary leader focused on the intersection of natural artistry and company culture. Known for his "nature first" design philosophy, he crafts high-end, ecologically balanced water features that appear as though they have existed for centuries. Through his award-winning work, Larry is an advocate for elevating the pond build trade by prioritizing core values, structured leadership and team empowerment.

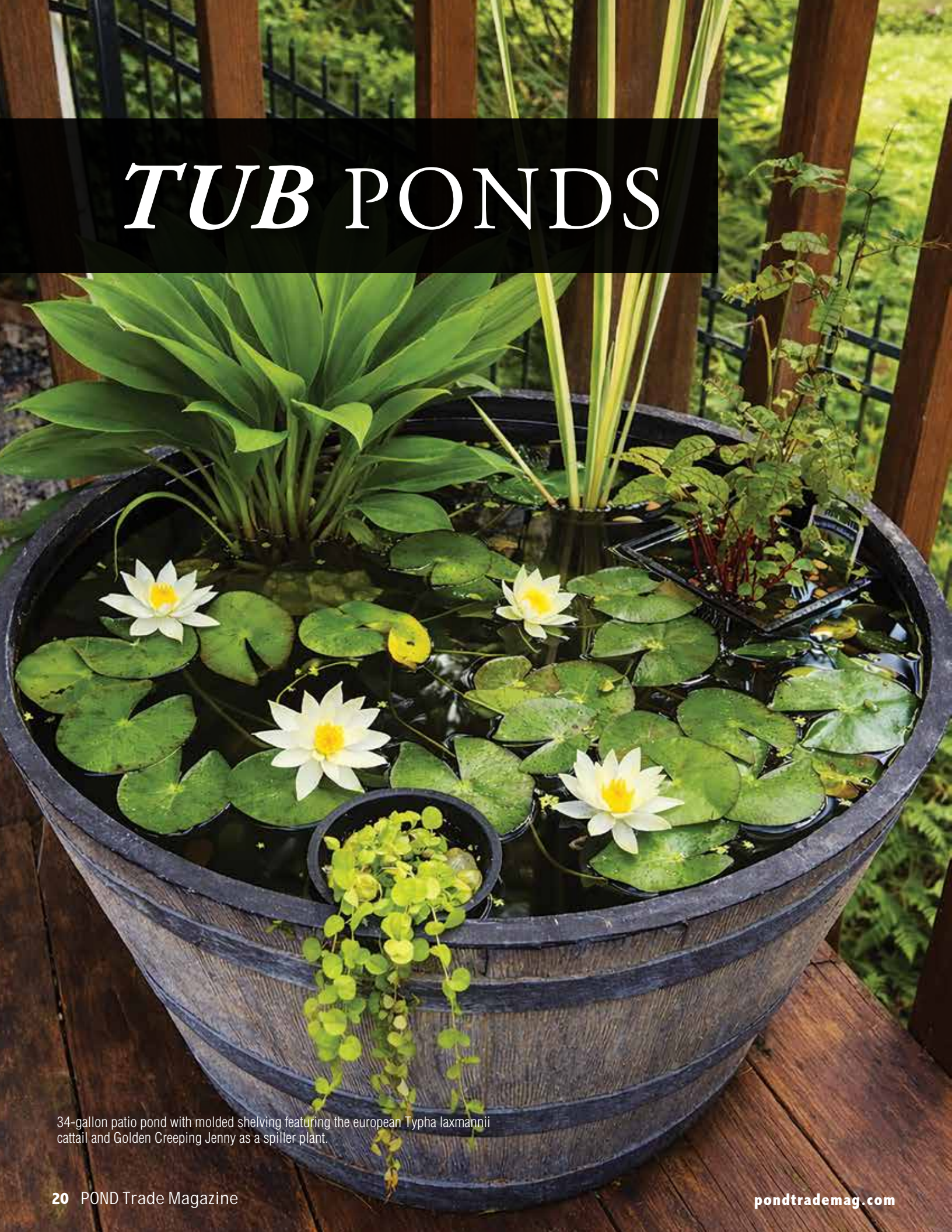


Learn more about Reflections Water Gardens at www.reflectionswatergardens.com.



Visitors navigate a custom inflatable obstacle course at the natural swimming pond at Land of Natura, where recreational design integrates with engineered water systems. (Courtesy of CRS4REC, crs4rec.com/resources/project/case-study-the-land-of-natura/)

TUB PONDS



34-gallon patio pond with molded shelving featuring the european *Typha laxmannii* cattail and Golden Creeping Jenny as a spiller plant.

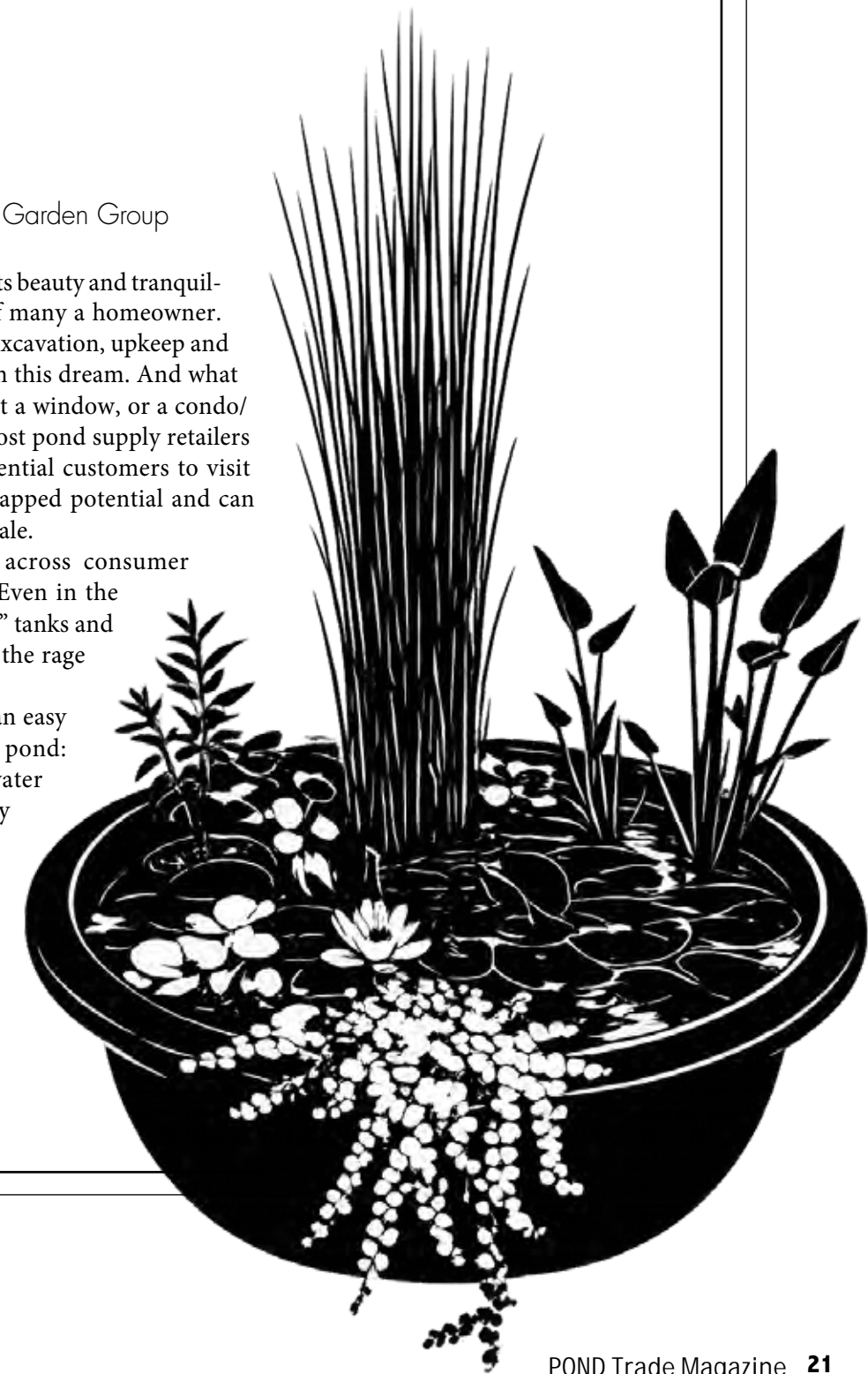
The pond hobby's gateway drug or valid small-space alternative?

by **Dr. Ted Coletti**,
Skylands Aquarium & Water Garden Group

The backyard pond, with its beauty and tranquility, is on the wish list of many a homeowner. But the required space, excavation, upkeep and expense drives many away from this dream. And what of those in apartments with just a window, or a condo/townhome with just a deck? Most pond supply retailers may not consider these as potential customers to visit a pond store. But they are untapped potential and can enjoy a pond on a very small scale.

"Nano" has been a trend across consumer products for the past decade. Even in the related aquarium hobby, "nano" tanks and smaller fish and shrimp are all the rage now.

In the pond hobby there is an easy alternative to the traditional pond: the free-standing container water garden or "tub pond." Many retailers have set up displays of indoor setups with LEDs, from misting floor models



to tiny tabletop designs by Aquascapes. There are also outdoor formal tubs that have been popular with aquarists since this author began “evangelizing” the practice of “taking your fish outside” in print and club programs decades ago. Practical DIY free-standing inserts from Beckett and MacCourt were available off the shelf at Lowe’s and Home Depot up until a couple of years ago, now by special order on their websites. At the premium end of the price spectrum, more stylized “patio ponds” with water features are offered from various vendors and on Amazon. Agricultural stock tanks from farm supply dealers have been turned into free-standing ponds ranging from 25 to 600 gallons.

Benefits of Tub Ponds

A free-standing tub pond is not just an alternative to a larger in-ground. They have benefits over traditional ponds:

- Ability to smell the flowers and taste the nectars of plants like waterlilies.
- Observe insects and aquatic life up close.
- Bring a slice of the aquatic world to more places in your living space: from your kitchen counter to by a chair on your deck.

Marketing tub and patio ponds to the consumer who has not considered these as a possibility for their living space requires new messaging. In my water gardening programs and lectures, I always mention the late great Greg Speichert’s quote: “Water gardening is for the gardening impaired: you cannot fail!” You cannot over or under water a marginal aquatic or bog plant — they self-regulate. You can even grow

them in plain pea gravel and perforated baskets, using the new PondTabb Jr. fertilizer (1/5 the concentration of the standard tablets). “Black-thumb gardening” and “no-soil approach” can be marketing messages to a new demographic who want to garden but either lack the confidence nor want to get their hands too dirty.

Then there are fishes. A trepidation for some consumers, but one that



34-gallon patio pond with molded shelving featuring the european Typha laxmannii cattail and Golden Creeping Jenny as a spiller plant.

should be encouraged due to the activity and interest they provide. It should be mentioned that fishes are not required for container or patio ponds. But they do devour insect larvae and help fertilize the plants. And by not including the classic goldfish or koi, maintenance is very easy. Little to no feeding is required for small tropical and temperate fishes available in pet stores, as insect larvae, microorganisms and algae are in abun-

dance for such small bellies (although I find feeding a little flake food every day does wonders for the plants). Indeed, if the customer goes this route — no mechanical filtration nor aeration is required! None of my 30-plus free-standing tub ponds have mechanical aeration or water features, except for one shaded tub with fancy goldfish and sponge filter.

Probably the biggest concern I hear from interested water gardeners and “non-ponders” is “won’t this attract mosquitoes.” Yes it will. And that’s a good thing, because your tub pond will help control mosquitoes on your property. A female mosquito has a set number of eggs to deposit in standing water each evening. Most likely this will be in the gutters on houses in your neighborhood, where they will eventually hatch and start biting. But if they deposit their clutch in a patio pond, their progeny will not see the light of day. In the 30-plus tub ponds I maintain, there is ZERO mosquito larvae. The egg rafts are eaten the next day by my fishes. As an unnecessary redundancy, 1/4 to 1/2 of a mosquito dunk (depending on tub size) once month can be added.

Location, Location, Location

How should you get started with container ponding? Success boils down to two key considerations: expected temperature and light. The primary way to manage these is deciding where to situate your tub. The most successful, low-maintenance tub pond is one located in that “sweet spot” that grows and flowers your plants, filters your water and warms your fishes — but not so much that it overheats or propagates excessive algae. Note I am

referring to free-standing containers here. Sunken tubs are my least favorite. Getting on my stomach to smell the flowers, search for fry and observe is not enjoyable. Leave inground ponds for koi and goldfish viewing.

Temperature impacts oxygen levels (cooler water holds more). You manage this by (1) sticking with small fishes, (2) choosing a location and surface covering plants so water temperatures do not exceed 90 F for most of the daylight hours and (3) selecting a tub with at least 15-inch depth.

Light via solar radiation is the engine that powers your tub’s natural filtration system. Plants and bacteria take up nitrogenous wastes and other dissolved organic compounds (DOC) as fuel, creating food sources for a variety of tub life. At least six hours full sun will support the widest selection of plants and create adequate vegetative filtration, while ensuring your tub warms

sufficiently during the day. More light is better to maximize flowering and improve filtration. Midday sun is the hottest and brightest, but a photoperiod of morning and late afternoon can suffice and prevent overheating in warm climates. Do not despair if you cannot provide this much full sun. I maintain several container ponds in shadier locations using appropriate plants such as Lizard Tail, Royal Fern, Iris pseudocorus, Peletandria virginica, Creeping Jenny, Golden Carex and Pickeral.

Tub Selection

Ranging in size from tabletop to hot tub, container ponds utilize a variety of materials from the intentional to the repurposed. If it holds water, someone, somewhere, has made a pond out of it. Dedicated container pond kits are available, some with water features. Farm stores sell a variety of stock tanks. These will require milk crates and potentially

clay bricks to support marginal plants at their preferred depths. My most versatile tub for small fishes and plants is the affordable 34-gallon, 40-inch diameter, three-shelved patio pond available at home improvement stores.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, it is tub shape, rather than volume, that is most important in your selection. My preferred tub is one where surface diameter (top length) exceeds depth. This provides adequate gas exchange that allays two concerns: oxygen depletion and water stagnation. This shape also provides better evaporative cooling, which helps during summer heat.

Lastly, when choosing a container ensure the material is either a dedicated pond, a safe No. 5 plastic or has a food-grade designation. Other plastics, such as in garden planters, can poison or set back all kinds of important life in the aquatic food chain. Containers can be made safe by coating them with liquid

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rubber designated safe for ponds. Do not use cinder or cement block in a tub pond as they harden the water excessively.

Planting: Thrillers, Fillers and Spillers

Plants are the most important component of your tub pond. They offer up not only beauty, but also filtration that removes organic wastes (not just ammonia and nitrate). As a result, mechanical filters and water changes are generally unnecessary in tubs with small fishes for the 3-5 months they stand.

Try to incorporate thrillers, spillers and fillers when planting a container pond.

Thrillers would be considered the tall background deep water marginals. These also tend to be primary vegetative filters. What is the mark of a

good vegetative filter? Fast growth and a spreading root system. Aquatic Iris, Pickerel Rush, Cattail (I prefer Typha laxamanii), Monkey Flower (M. repens), and Carex aquatilis species are good examples. To be effective as filters, plants must be bedded in perforated pond baskets. My preferred medium is rinsed pea gravel in the 5-inch to 9-inch perforated pond pots. Soil in small free-standing containers can produce an odor. Fertilize using 1 PondTabbs Jr. tablet every 1-2 weeks, staggering the plants that receive them to not overload the nutrients all at one time.

Fillers are smaller marginals for the shelves, floating plants and of course the waterlilies. No tub pond is complete without one, if there is no water feature to disrupt them (and why

I do not use them). I recommend the pygmy Nymphaea 'Helvola,' the compact N. 'Chromatella,' and the small N. 'Joanne Pring,' as reliably flowering favorites. Tub ponds >40 inches in diameter (stock tanks, for example) can feature 'Attraction,' 'Colorado,' or 'Sioux' for ease of flowering. Tub-housed waterlilies are best planted in smaller 1-2 gallon solid pots with clay soil covered with sand then gravel. Their floating pads help with evaporation and cooling of the tub — key since the water is more shallow (and why small aquarium fishes are a better option if not using an aerator).

Make fertilizing easy to maximize your flowering: at the first of the month use 1-2 waterlily tablets per gallon of pot, placed deep along the sides so as not to burn the crown. Another easy schedule

is 1 tablet per pot every Sunday,

Spillers extend their foliage over the side of your container and every tub pond needs them. Golden Creeping Jenny is my go-to spiller, followed by Bacopa moninieri, Parrot's feather (especially the red-stem variety), and the aquatic mints. I hook mini pond pots to the side on my tubs for this purpose, planting in pea gravel or soil. Shower curtain S-hooks are handy here. Fertilize as you do the Thrillers above.

Start Me Up

Tub ponding fish and plants is like flying an airplane. You get nervous at takeoff and landing. The actual flying part is mostly autopilot. I like to set up a new tub a month or two before adding fish and tropical plants. Get your hardy plants settled in earlier,

SUGGESTED FISHES FOR CONTAINER PONDS

- **Ricefish**
(Near freezing–100 °F)
- **White Cloud Mountain Minnows**
(40–95 °F)
- **Zebra or Pearl Danio**
(45–100 °F)
- **Paradise Fish**
(Near freezing–110 °F
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- **Rosy Barbs**
(35–100 °F
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15 gallon garden planter with the dwarf hardy waterlily, Helvola. The variety only requires a few hours of sunlight to flower.

too, so they are ready to function as filters when the fish arrive. If a home aquarium is free of disease, add a bucket of aquarium water from the water column to help kick-start your tub's nitrogen cycle. Squeezing out a sponge filter into the tub can seed valuable bacteria and infusoria, too. Add some crumbled dry leaves to feed them. A dose of nitrogen-consuming beneficial bacteria can also be employed — just choose an established brand and check the expiration date. Smaller bottles are available from reliable brands like SeaChem, API and Microbe-Life. All this prep ensures biological balance, including important biofilms and phototrophic bacteria, prior to introducing fish.

So, when do we put out our aquarium fishes? My rule of

thumb is to add fish when tub water temperatures are the same or warmer than their aquarium or retail store purchased. A digital aquarium thermometer comes in handy here (floating pond and pool thermometers are notoriously inconsistent). Water chemistries should be similar, too. I do a 90% water change in my tubs a few days to a week prior to fish introduction (for me in Zone 6 New Jersey that's Memorial Day Weekend for true tropicals, May for cool water tropicals listed in this article). Move live or plastic plants around the tub edges to prevent jumping. After their introduction, nearly all fish adjust to daily fluctuations in temperature and water chemistry as the season progresses (like in nature) — even more so than their aquarium counter-

parts! Breeding is common once they are settled and a sight to behold up close.

Maintenance? Meh.

One of the attractions of tub ponding vs. aquarium is their lower maintenance. For example, after that water change prior to fish introduction, I am done for the season with that activity. Water changes should never be discouraged, of course, but I do not bother as I set up my tubs properly a month or two earlier. I top off with either rain barrel water or dechlorinated tap water.

Light daily feedings of a quality flake will benefit both fish and plants. But if you get busy or go on vacation, no worries or need to find a sitter, as nature provides a bounty. Spent flowers and dead leaves on all plants can be pruned to encourage new growth. See previous section on easy fertilizing regimens.

Tub ponds have higher evaporation and need to be "topped off" from time to time. Rainfall helps. Your tub water will get harder and more alkaline with evaporation. I check KH in my tubs midseason and after a very heavy rain, and top off with tap water if the reading drops below 3. Otherwise, I use soft neutral water from my rain barrels, or tap water if the KH is not above 8.

Teardown Time

Now to land the plane. When do we take in our small tropical fishes? When water temperatures are expected to drop below the minimum for the species going forward in time. For me in Zone 6 that is mid-September through October for true tropicals, November for the cold-tolerant fish listed here. If a cold snap comes in late summer, you can add a heater and wait it out. But get an accurate mid- or late-day water (not air) temperature reading before you panic.

When you do bring your charges back inside, be cognizant their tub water will be VERY different than your aquarium. I fill a small acclimation tank, or their permanent tank, with 100% tub water. Over the course of five days I slowly acclimate them back to treated tap water. This is particularly important for juvenile fishes. Alternatively, you can donate your fishes back to your pet store, another hobbyist or a local aquarium society for winter.

"The Tub Pond Handbook" describes several techniques for overwintering plants. For hardy plants, I wait until a hard frost kills off the foliage. This, combined with the cessation of fertilizers at least one month prior, triggers them to go through a proper dormancy cycle, resulting in a stronger plant for spring. Most of my stock then gets my CMS method (cold moist storage). For basket plants, this entails letting them drain for five minutes and then shaving off their roots with a razor knife. Cut back any foliage to near the gravel line. For solid pots, tip them to drain, then remove all but the tiny indicator leaves near their crown. Then place the pots

in a Styrofoam or plastic box. You can sprinkle a little peat moss on top to deter fungus. An old plastic shopping bag can be tucked around the pot(s) and fluffed up to make room for new shoots. The boxes then go into an unheated garage, or if Styrofoam, a solid outdoor shed.

What about the tubs? For winter here in my Zone 6, I drain my tubs and store them upside down. Thin or cheaper plastics get stored inside my shed.

Water gardening and tub ponds are more popular than ever. Maybe it is the movement of fish, discovery of fry, or smell of a waterlily, all at arm's length? My tub ponds are still an immensely satisfying activity, and one I look forward to every spring.

I hope you discover the same. ☺

**Monitor children around any pond. Tubs are hard to get out of. Injury or drowning can occur in even small volumes of water.*

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Dr. Ted Coletti expands on these concepts in his book, "The Tub Pond Handbook", where he shares how to turn even the smallest spaces into living water gardens.

About the Author

Dr. Ted Coletti is a hobbyist, writer and speaker known for pioneering the "tub pond" movement in the United States. A former editor of the Journal of the American Livebearer Association and columnist for FAMA and TFH magazines, he is the author of Aquarium Care of Livebearing Fish and The Tub Pond Handbook, now in its third edition.



Since the late 1990s, Coletti has championed outdoor fishkeeping through container water gardens. He founded the Aquarium Hobby Historical Society of America and remains active with the North Jersey Aquarium Society. Based in New Jersey's Skylands, he maintains a fishroom and more than 30 tub ponds.

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| Language of **Koi** |



Koi Nutrition

Feeding for healthy metabolism

by **Rajat Agarwal,**
ATX Koi

In koi keeping, discussions about food often begin with brand, protein percentage or whether a feed is meant for growth, color or all-season use. But that is not really where nutrition begins. Nutrition begins with metabolism, and metabolism begins with water temperature.

Koi will often rise to the surface with energy, appearing eager for food.

This conditions hobbyists to think in terms of appetite rather than koi physiology. However, because koi are ectothermic animals, their body temperature, metabolic rate, digestive efficiency, immune performance and oxygen demand are all controlled by the water they live in. A koi does not process food according to the label on the bag, but instead according to the temperature and oxygen conditions in the pond.

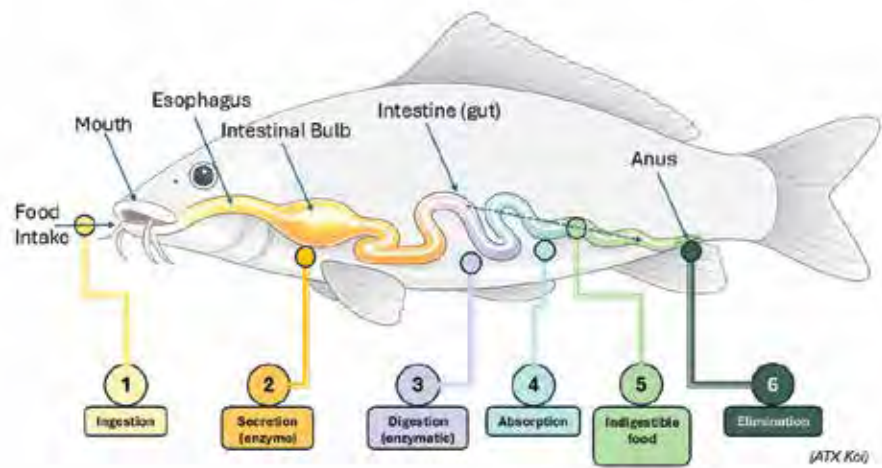


Figure 1: Koi's digestive system, simplified from "Effects of temperature on feeding and digestive processes in fish"; Helene Volkoff et al.

A Unique Digestive System

Unlike other fish with more distinct stomachs, a koi doesn't have a true stomach. Food passes from the esophagus into a long, coiled intestinal tract where digestion proceeds through enzymatic action as it moves along. This anatomy adapts koi well to grazing.

If food is not efficiently broken down by the enzymes in the koi's intestinal tract, more nutrients pass through as waste. This directly impacts pond filtration, creating cloudier water, increased ammonia levels and elevated organic load.

Impact of Water Temperature on Metabolism

As water warms from winter lows into spring and early summer, koi metabolism increases, enzyme activity improves, gut motility becomes more effective, feeding response strengthens and the fish can use nutrients more efficiently for growth, tissue maintenance and activity. However, this increase in performance occurs only within an optimal temperature range.

Figure 2 shows the conceptual temperature-to-metabolism curve. The graph helps illustrate that koi performance does not rise in a straight line with warmer water or drop in cold water. Instead, it follows an inverted bell curve.

At the cold end of the range, digestion slows so dramatically that feeding

becomes inefficient and potentially harmful. Around 50°F (10°C) and below, koi may enter a semi-dormant, low-energy state commonly described as torpor. Gut motility drops, enzyme activity is reduced and food is far less likely to be processed well. Under these conditions, feeding is often more likely to create internal digestive stress or external water-quality problems than to deliver real nutritional benefit.

As the temperature rises into the

favorable range, metabolism improves and koi perform at their best. But once the temperature climbs too high, performance declines again. This is not because the fish have suddenly become inactive in the same way they do in winter, but because heat stress and reduced dissolved oxygen begin to impose physiological limits.

At the warm end of the curve, the danger changes form. Above the upper optimal range, especially once pond temperatures move into the mid-80s°F, dissolved oxygen becomes a limiting factor. Warm water cannot hold as much oxygen as cool water. At the same time, the koi's physiological demand rises, their breathing effort increases and the pond's biological processes accelerate. Organic waste breaks down, uneaten food decomposes faster and the risk of ammonia rises faster. Even a mature filtration system can be stressed if high temperatures, feeding and organic load begin to increase at the same time.

Feeding strategy must align with water temperature. Table 1 summarizes the correlation of temperature to metabolism of koi.

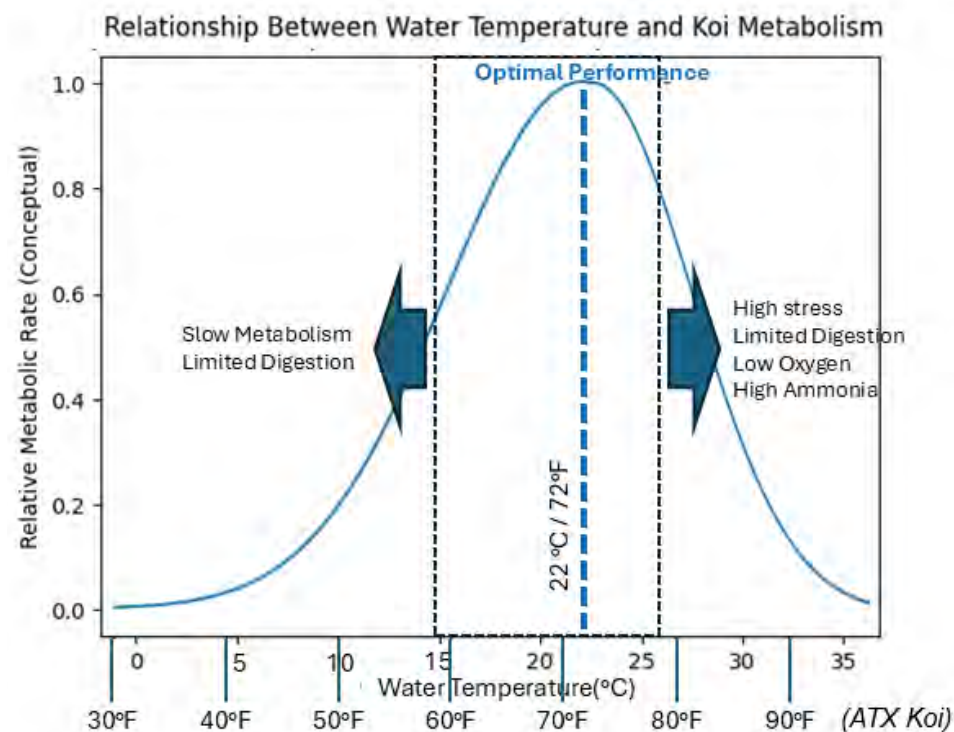


Figure 2: Temperature to metabolism relationship for koi (based on published carp physiology research). Metabolic rate of 1 implies 100% efficiency.

Temperature	Biological Effect
Below 50 °F (10 °C)	Dangerous; Digestion nearly stops; feeding should stop
50-59 °F (10-15 °C)	Very slow metabolism; limited digestion
59-68 °F (15-20 °C)	Metabolism increases; light feeding possible
68-79 °F (20-26 °C)	Optimal physiological range (Best temp ~72°F / 22°C)
79-86 °F (26-30 °C)	Increased stress; oxygen becomes limiting
Above 86 °F (30 °C)	Dangerous; immune suppression and ammonia toxicity increase; koi often reduce or stop feeding under extreme heat; koi often reduce or stop feeding under extreme heat

Table 1: Impact of feeding by temperature range, on the biological effect on koi. Courtesy ATX Koi Corp.

Food Labels and Composition

Now that we better understand koi metabolism and the impact of water temperature, let's turn to the practical side of food labels and nutrition.

Protein is the cornerstone of koi nutrition, especially for growth, tissue repair and muscle development. Protein content typically should be about 30-40%, however some growth diets have higher percentages. The source of protein matters more than percentage, as it directly impacts digestibility. Fish meal, krill meal, shrimp meal, wheat germ protein and spirulina are generally more useful ingredients than vague by-products or low-value bulk protein

sources.

Wheat-germ-based diets are recommended when the pond temperatures are between the 50-65°F range. The reason for this guidance is straightforward: wheat germ is protein-based (typically 26-35%), provides essential amino acids, fatty acids and vitamin E needed for the health of the koi, making it easier to digest than richer growth formulas.

Fat is a type of lipid and provides energy, supports cell membranes and contributes to skin quality and sheen. In better koi foods, fats are often derived from fish oil or krill oil, which offer useful fatty acid profiles. Heavy, poorly defined animal fats are less desirable. The preferred fat content is within the 5-10%

Nutrient	Range	Why It's Important
Protein	30-45%	Growth, muscle and tissue repair, immune strength. Higher protein is ideal for juveniles or high growth objective
Fat	5-9%	Energy, metabolism, skin and scale health; use marine oils (fish/krill/squid).
Carbohydrates	20-40%	Energy source; allows proteins to be used for growth and immune function.
Fiber	2-8%	Aids digestion, prevents constipation (bloating), supports gut health.
Ash (Minerals)	6-12%	Provides essential minerals for bones, scales, and enzymes.
Moisture	6-12%	Ensures freshness and shelf stability; prevents spoilage.
Phosphorus	0.6-1.0%	Bone, scale, and energy metabolism.
Vitamin C	150-300 mg/kg	Immunity, healing, collagen and fin health.
Carotenoids	50-200 mg/kg	Enhances red, orange, and yellow coloration.
Calcium	0.7-1.2%	Bone and scale strength; muscle and nerve function.
Magnesium	0.05-0.1%	Nerve, muscle, and enzyme function.
Omega-3 / Omega-6	~2:1 ratio	Reduces inflammation, boosts color and immunity.
Sodium	0.2-0.5%	Maintains fluid balance; prevents gill/kidney stress.

Table 2: Summary of Nutrition values, recreated by ATX Koi Corp. Primary reference: NRC (2011) – Nutrient Requirements of Fish and Shrimp & Dr Jessie Sanders- How to Kill your Koi

range, depending on formula. The goal is not maximum richness but usable energy that does not overburden digestion or contribute to unnecessary waste.

Carbohydrates play a useful role although not as essential as protein or fat. Well-digested carbohydrates provide energy, allowing more protein to be used for growth and tissue repair rather than being burned as fuel. Ingredient quality is key. Wheat germ, rice bran and vegetable components can fit appropriately within a balanced koi food. Because carbohydrates are not always listed as a percentage on nutrition labels, be sure to look at the ingredient list, as some foods contain cheap fillers that pollute water and have minimal nutritional value.

Fiber is another key to maintaining healthy koi digestion. In their natural environment, koi constantly ingest small amounts of plant matter, detritus and algae, which keeps their intestinal tract functioning smoothly. A well-formulated koi diet includes an appropriate amount of fiber from sources such as spirulina, alfalfa, wheat germ or vegetable components to help regulate digestion and promote consistent nutrient absorption.

Vitamins such as A, C, E, K and the B-complex group are important in the koi diet. These constitute water-soluble and fat-soluble vitamins. Water-soluble vitamins (C and B-complex) need to be replenished more frequently than the others. Because vitamins also degrade over time, food stability and storage are important to consider. Even high-end nutrition can be compromised if bags are left open too long in heat, humidity or direct light.

Minerals, usually represented on the nutrition label as "ash," are widely misunderstood. "Ash" is not burnt material, but rather the percentage of mineral content. Minerals support skeletal development, scale quality and metabolic processes. However, more is not automatically better, and excessively high ash content may point to lower-value formulation or excessive indigestible mineral load, rather than premium nutrition.



synthetic environments (such as liner or concrete ponds) by re-mineralizing the water, detoxifying the environment and acting as a natural flocculent to polish water. Montmorillonite clay (or Koi Clay) is mineral-rich, calcium-based food that improves koi health, digestion and skin quality when added directly to ponds or mixed with food. This binds toxins and heavy metals, thereby helping detoxify the gut, increasing mineral intake and enhancing white and black skin luster.

This clay should only be given when the water temperature is above 60°F. These pellets are usually large. To feed smaller koi, the pellets could be crushed or moistened prior to feeding. It is also available in powder form. Although some koi foods already have this clay pre-mixed, if feeding separately then mix approximately ¼ cup of clay with 4 cups of koi food. This clay mix can be fed a few times a week for best results.

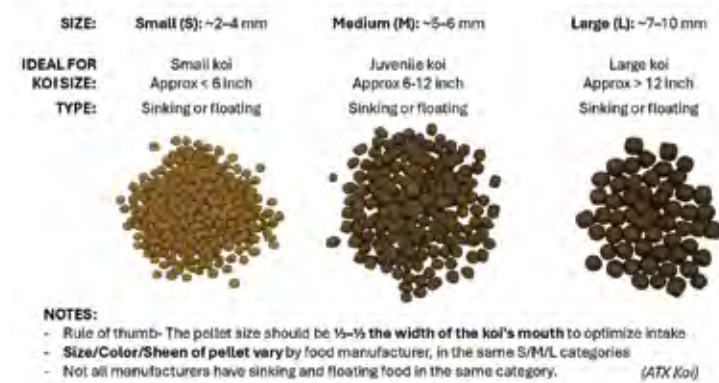


Figure 3: Koi food pellet-size recommendations.

A Treatise on Treats

While human food can make great supplemental food for koi for enrichment and variety, they are no substitute for balanced koi nutrition. Feed human treats sparingly and remove any uneaten portions promptly. Only offer human treats when water temperatures and water quality are appropriate for digestion.

Good treats: Good koi treats are fresh, simple foods offered only in small amounts as occasional supplements, not as dietary staples. Safer options include soft fruits and vegetables such as:

- Peeled orange segments
- Watermelon, cantaloupe and honeydew
- Romaine lettuce
- Blanched, shredded and softened spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and kale
- Strawberries, blueberries
- Zucchini
- Cucumber
- Shelled peas
- Small amounts of cooked pumpkin, sweet potato, carrots
- Small amounts of garlic and leeks

Koi may also enjoy natural protein-rich treats such as:

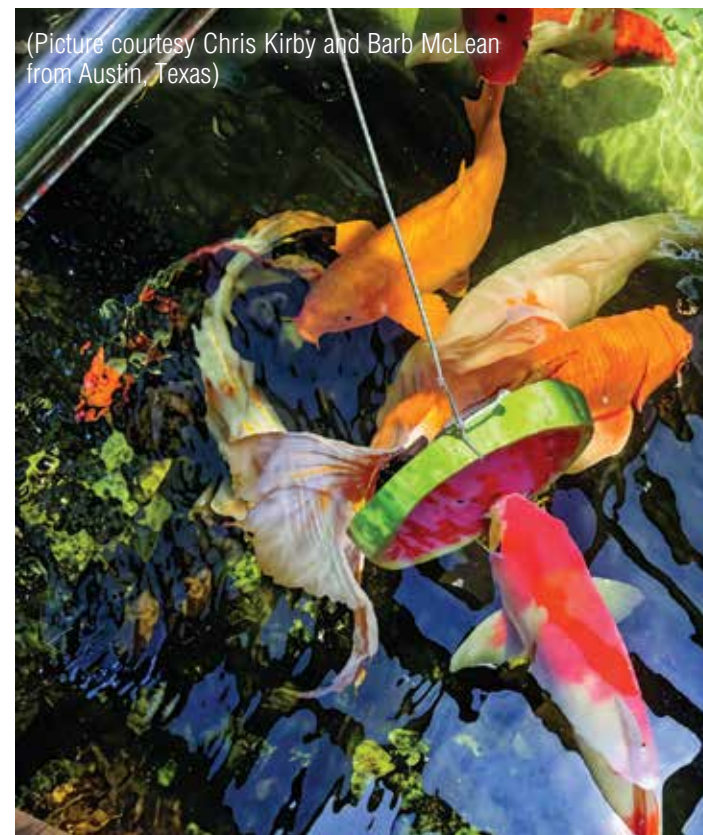
- Plain unsalted shrimp and prawns

- Unsalted and cleaned sardines, crayfish, clams
- Washed earthworms
- Daphnia, bloodworms, mosquito larvae
- Silkworm pupae, mealworms
- Nori or seaweed sheets for grazing
- Hardboiled egg pieces (especially yolk)
- Frog tadpoles

Not good treats: These constitute foods that are salty, sugary, oily, starchy, processed, difficult to digest or likely to foul the water, such as:

- Starchy/processed foods: white bread, crackers, chips, cookies, candy, pasta, rice, cereal
- Processed meats: beef, pork, lunch meats, chicken
- Pet food
- Fried foods
- Buttery foods
- Sauces
- Seasoned leftovers
- Flavored nuts
- Salty snack foods
- Toad tadpoles (usually toxic)

Never feed: Raw beans and uncooked legumes should also be avoided, as should large amounts of corn or other hard, starchy foods that pass poorly through the koi digestive tract. Even though koi will eagerly eat these items, they can contribute to bloating, excess waste, oily surface films, poor water quality and unnecessary stress on the fish and biofilter.



(Picture courtesy Chris Kirby and Barb McLean from Austin, Texas)

A Greater Understanding

The key to good feeding is that even the best koi food only works well when the koi are metabolically able to digest it and the pond is ecologically able to handle it. It's not based on percentage of protein, brand prestige or whether a feed is marketed for color or growth. ☞

New Book Spotlight

To learn more about koi nutrition and all other aspects of happy koi keeping and becoming confident stewards of your koi, this author is coming out with a new book called "Secrets for Happy Koi: Definitive Guide for New Koi and Pond Owner". It will cut through the confusion and help you understand koi and their evolution, pond startup, water chemistry basics, filtration, algae growth, bogs, plants, feeding and treats, quarantining, dealing with predators as well as koi health, with practical guidance rooted in real-world experience and aquatic science. Look for the release this spring. Go to fivecrowspress.com/koi to sign up for news, special koi keeping tips, and updates!

About the Author

Rajat Agarwal has been a pond owner since 2004. Through years of hands-on experience, and more than a few lessons learned the hard way, he has developed a fond love for koi, their gentle nature, their stunning variations in colors and styles, and refers to them as "Nature's Masterpieces". He's developed a deep understanding of what makes koi special, their varieties, building ponds, Japanese landscaping and pond keeping. Since 2022, he has made presentations on koi classification and varieties, koi ponds and building Japanese koi gardens for local pond societies in Austin, San Antonio, and Houston (as well as the Austin Oita Sisters Japanese Cultural Event). He has been featured on the Central Texas Gardner, KXAN 512 Studio and RJ Designs on KLBJ radio.

In May 2025, he opened ATX Koi Corp (www.atxkoi.com; @atxkoi on Facebook and Instagram), becoming the leading supplier of prime Japanese and domestic koi in the Greater Austin area. Along with amazing assortment of prime koi, the business also offers consulting services, pond care supplies and accessories, food, non-prescription medical treatments and maintenance services for ponds.



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CHOOSING THE RIGHT POND & WATER FEATURE PUMPS



A contractor's guide

by **Ron Maurice,**

Little Giant, a Franklin Electric brand

Water features elevate outdoor spaces, but the pump behind the scenes determines whether that feature thrives or fails. For contractors, selecting the right pump for your client's needs is critical for performance, efficiency, reliability and—most importantly—customer satisfaction. This guide explores key factors to consider when choosing pumps for ponds and water features.

Understand the Application

Before sizing or specifying a pump, identify its primary function. Is it maintaining water quality, supporting filtration or powering a dramatic display? Each purpose influences pump requirements. Circulation and aeration keep water moving and oxygenated, maintaining a healthy ecosystem and minimizing algae growth. Filtration support ensures proper flow for skimmers, UV clarifiers and biological filters, thereby maintaining clean and clear water. For aesthetic appeal, pumps may power waterfalls, streams or decorative fountains.

If your water feature uses chemicals for water treatment, such as algaecides, chlorine or other sanitizers, ensure that you select a pump with materials and seals that are compatible with these chemicals. This helps prevent premature wear and ensures reliable long-term operation. Always check manufacturer guidelines for chemical compatibility and warranty coverage. Identifying and understanding the application is fundamental to selecting the proper pump and components for the job.



Determine Pump Type

When selecting a pump, carefully consider the differences between magnetic drive, direct drive and wet rotor motors, as each type offers unique advantages that can enhance performance, efficiency and reliability based on the feature requirements.

Magnetic drive pumps utilize a sealed magnetic coupling to eliminate shaft seals, resulting in an oil-free motor, which is ideal for environments with aquatic life. Direct drive pumps, on the other hand, connect the motor shaft directly to the impeller, delivering the highest efficiency and power transfer, which is perfect for applications requiring strong pressure. Wet rotor pumps immerse the rotor in the pumped fluid for cooling and lubrication, resulting in quiet, low-maintenance operation.

Each type offers unique benefits in terms of pressure capability, energy efficiency, maintenance requirements and noise level. The following table provides a quick reference to help evaluate these characteristics.

Comparison Table: Common Pump Types for Pond and Water Feature Applications.

Pump Type	Pressure	Energy Efficiency	Maintenance	Noise Level
Magnetic Drive	Low	High	Low	Quiet
Direct Drive	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Wet Rotor	Moderate	Moderate to High	Moderate	Very Quiet

Calculate the Pump's Performance Requirements

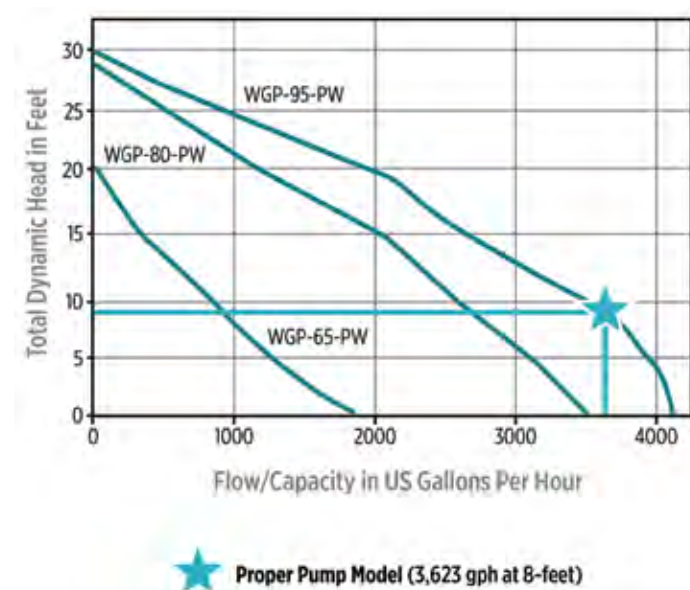
To ensure optimal pump performance and avoid common issues, take the time to perform accurate calculations for pump selection.

Start by determining the flow rate.

For ponds, select a pump that can circulate the entire volume of water once per hour, considering factors such as fish load, plant density and water clarity goals. For waterfalls, aim for approximately 100 gallons per hour for every inch of waterfall width to create a natural flow. Be sure to include both the pond and the waterfall water volume when calculating the total pump flow rate.

Next, calculate the Total Dynamic Head (TDH), which includes the vertical lift plus friction losses from pipes, fittings, valves and filters. Measure the highest point the water must reach in your application—this is the “total lift” required.

Finally, when selecting a pump, make sure the plumbing matches the pump's discharge size. If it doesn't, either choose a different pump or adjust the plumbing size. Avoid using adapters to reduce the connection size, as this can negatively impact pump performance and shorten its lifespan.



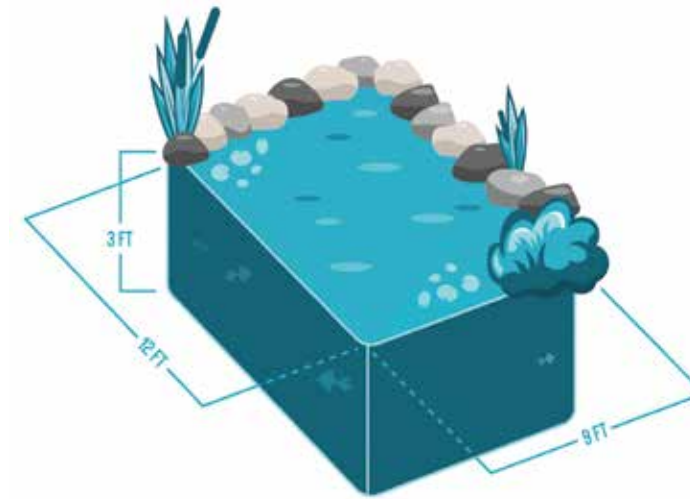
To illustrate how to properly size a pump for your next project, consider the following step-by-step example:

Step 1: Flow Rate: Calculate how much water needs to be circulated

- Length (12 ft) x Width (9 ft) x Depth (3 ft) x 7.48 = 2,423 gallons
- Include waterfall: Width of stream (1 ft) x 1,200 GPH = 1,200 gallons
- Take the total flow rate and add the waterfall calculation - 2,423 + 1,200 = 3,623

Step 2: TDH: Measure the maximum vertical height water needs to reach

- The pump you choose should have a maximum head capacity that is equal to or greater than this number.
- In this example, the pump is located at the base of the pond, which is 3 ft deep. The waterfall is 5 ft above ground, so the pump needs to move water up to an 8 ft vertical distance.



Step 3: Performance Curve: Reference the flow rate, 3,623 GPH, and TDH, 8 ft, on the curve to select the proper pump model. (See Proper Pump Model on page 36)

Common Pump Selection Mistakes to Avoid

Various issues can arise, so it's important to be aware of common pitfalls. One frequent mistake is undersizing pumps for waterfalls, which results in weak flow and a broken water sheet that looks unnatural. Another common oversight is ignoring head height; when the pump reaches its curve limit, water features can starve and fail to perform as intended. Selecting the wrong pump type also causes problems—for example, using a low-pressure magnetic-drive pump for a tall cascade may not deliver the necessary performance. Additionally, failing to account for filtration components such as UV clarifiers, skimmers and biological filters adds friction losses that reduce overall efficiency.

In addition to avoiding common mistakes, selecting high-

quality pumps can enhance reliability and customer satisfaction. Pumps with longer warranties often indicate better durability and manufacturer support, helping to prevent premature failures and reduce costly callbacks. Prioritizing quality ensures the water feature performs well and stands the test of time.

To streamline the pump selection process and ensure the best results for your water feature, follow this step-by-step workflow:

Decision Workflow (At a Glance)

1. Define the application (circulation, filtration support, display).
2. Calculate pond volume and turnover rate (baseline ~1x/hour)
3. Determine TDH (vertical lift + friction).
4. Match the flow at TDH to the manufacturer's performance curve.
5. Prepare the installation site (alignment, flexible connections, vault or screening).
6. Test, commission and schedule maintenance.

Conclusion

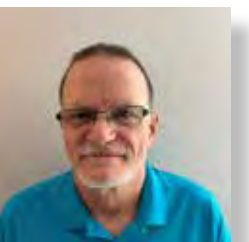
Choosing the right pump for ponds and water features requires an approach that strikes a balance between technical accuracy and practical considerations. Success begins with understanding the purpose of the feature and selecting a pump type that aligns with your client's performance goals. Accurate sizing, based on flow rate and total dynamic head, reduces operational issues and improves efficiency. By following a structured process and prioritizing quality, you can deliver water features that are visually stunning, environmentally balanced and built for long-term performance—providing clients with lasting satisfaction. ☞

Sources:

Little Giant. Water Features & Pond Products Catalog, p. 3. <https://www.littlegiant.com>

About the Author

Ron Maurice has played a key role at Franklin Electric in supporting two of its most recognized brands: Red Lion and Little Giant. As Product Manager, he has spent eight years guiding Red Lion's pump solutions and five years overseeing Little Giant's water garden division. Ron's extensive product knowledge and commitment to quality help ensure customers receive dependable solutions for a wide range of applications.





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SORCERY IN THE *Secret Garden*

Designing magic
in the landscape

by Mr. Underhill,

Project by Darby Vedder,
Cardinal Pond Design LLC

Let's focus on hocus pocus.

In recent years, even those who possess no magical powers have become familiar with some aspect of the wizarding world. Muggles everywhere recognize the name Potter and are even well acquainted with wizarding schools such as Hogwarts and the curriculum they offer. While courses such as "Spells and Charms" and "Defense Against the Dark Arts" are popular and fill up quickly, there are lesser-known areas of study where magic is used to interpret and influence our natural outdoor spaces.

Students pursuing a degree in Water Feature Wizardry will become proficient in those staples of the study program, such as "Enchanted Forestry" and "Levitation-Based Landscaping." In their junior year, after building a solid foundation, they can focus their studies on the residential sector.





Before: Magic works in mysterious ways. 18 years prior Alvina hardscapes created this formal bluestone patio. Now fate has drawn them back to collaborate in this mystical transformation.



After: Presto Change-o! A few waves of the wand and this backyard space becomes an enchanted retreat guaranteed to get the imagination working overtime.

Recently, the chance came my way to guide a group of inquisitive pupils through one of these focused elective courses. “Sorcery in the Secret Garden (WIZ 301)” focuses on residential garden construction through the implementation of magical components.

So what is magic anyway? It probably makes sense for us to start there.

Members of the non-magical world might define it as the use of rituals, spells or charms intended to influence events, people or natural forces through the use of supernatural means. Members of the wizarding world know it’s a little more complicated than that. We know that magic cannot be possessed, only guided, and even the weakest witch or warlock can harness powerful magic if their intention is clear.

The objective of the course is to reveal and reinforce the connection with magical potential in the garden space by focusing efforts toward manipulating the imagination of the observer. Stage-based magicians like Penn and Teller use sleight of hand to provide the illusion of magic. Students in this course will use sleight of mind to aid the observer in providing their own sense of enchantment.

Readers will find a summary of the semester’s study, including the students who participated, the syllabus modules included and their magical relevance. Conclusions drawn from completion of the thesis project will follow the general summary.

Participants

Darby Vedder, Cardinal Pond Design and Landscape LLC: Darby is pursuing a graduate degree in Water Feature Wizardry with a minor in Telekinetic Fountainscaping. In the real world, Darby is a Certified Aquascape Contractor servicing Charleston, SC, and the surrounding areas.

Cesar Rodriguez and the Alvina Hardscapes team: Cesar is an accomplished Masonry Mage, 6th level. He and members of his team are auditing this course in conjunction with their fulfillment of “Intro to Water Feature Wizardry” (WIZ 101).

Joanna Barryman, Botany Bay Landscaping: Joanna is a proud graduate of the Houdini School for Herbology and is pursuing a second degree in Botanical Bewitchery. She is using this course to serve as her work study in Apparitional Aquatics.

Course Overview: Sorcery in the Secret Garden (WIZ 301)

“Sorcery in the Secret Garden (WIZ 301)” is centered on the application of the “4 Pillars of Prestidigitation” as a framework for designing immersive, story-driven garden spaces. Through these modules, students explore how principles such as movement, transformation, animation and the passage of time can be intentionally integrated into water feature design to influence

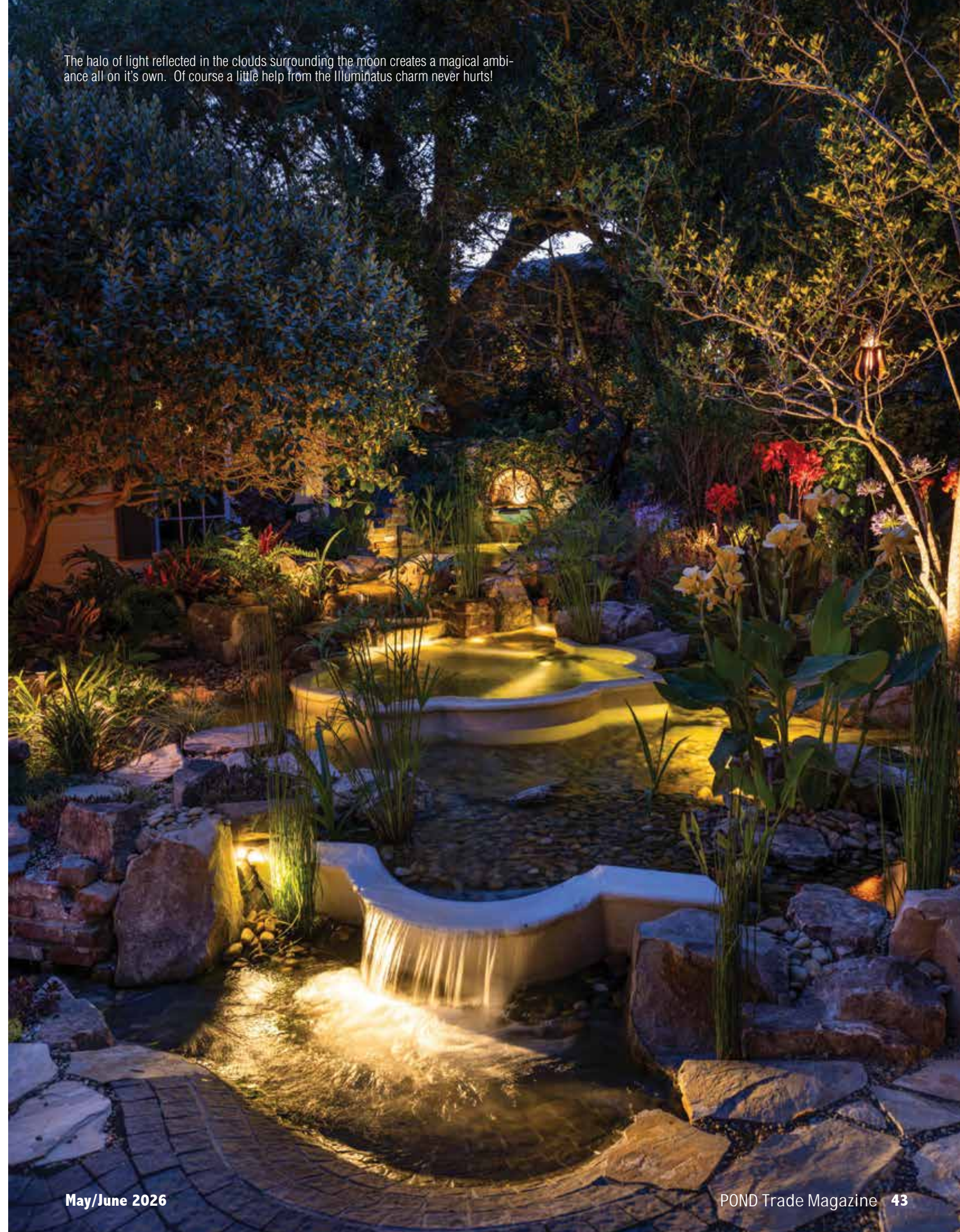
perception and create a sense of wonder. Each pillar serves as a guide for blending technical craftsmanship with creative storytelling, resulting in landscapes that engage visitors on both a visual and emotional level.

Pillar 1: Portal Management

Use of magical doorways (portals) is an essential element of any enchanted garden space. Balancing entrance and exit portals is recommended to keep magical energy moving through the space. This garden features an entrance portal in the form of a moon gate tucked quietly into a hedge of camellia. The



Just utter the word “Open Sesame” with an open mind to gain passage to that which lies beyond. Be it friend or folly there’s only one way to find out.



The halo of light reflected in the clouds surrounding the moon creates a magical ambience all on it’s own. Of course a little help from the Illuminatus charm never hurts!

Mojave stone walkway leads across the garden, where the mystery of an aging wooden door entices visitors to explore further. Without realizing it, they soon cross the threshold of the entrance portal and are secretly transported into the bewitching space beyond.

The aging wooden door sits below grade, and where it goes is unclear at first. Stimulating the imagination to speculate what might lie beyond these walls, this old, beat-up door serves as our exit portal. Rarely used, but useful nonetheless. Unlike the entrance portal, where it leads will be different for each traveler. Willingly participating in the storyline is the first sign that the spells and incantations are taking effect on our visitors.

Pillar 2: Transfiguration

Much like a lock of hair on a voodoo doll, normal, everyday items can have intense magical powers when used in the right context. Using an item with a significant personal history can greatly increase the strength of any magical undertaking.

With each visitor focused on the space beyond that wooden door, they are drawn onto the garden patio and forced to make a decision. Will they continue straight through the garden and skip all the attractions along the way, or will they



be led astray? Knowing that the longer a visitor is entertained, the longer they will remain, we present two distractions. Each is an example of transfiguration.

Several years prior, during a collaboration with Cardinal Ponds, we removed a decaying three-tiered fountain to make room for a brand-new fountain-scape. This old fountain found its way to Darby's backyard. It sat there, seemingly never to be used again. Little did we know it was gathering magic all along. Resurrecting this fountain into two different features for our current project, we used the principles of transfiguration to create two separate sources of distraction.

To the left, the bowls that used to form the "tiers" are transformed into a fire bowl levitating within an overflowing fountain bowl. To the right, tucked away in the far corner, the gently gurgling sound of water beckons you to stray beyond the crumbling brick partition wall. Rewarded on your arrival, you'll see three bubbling urns. By harnessing the powers of such a relevant relic, we ensure that the transfiguration spell will be strong enough to keep our visitors from realizing that these bubbling urns used to be the pedestals for that very same three-



A simple levitation spell is all it takes to keep this fire bowl floating on the water's surface. Have a seat for awhile and let the spell take hold of you.

tiered fountain.

Pillar 3: Spells of Animation

Demonstrating aptitude in the three categories of animation spells (animation, de-animation and re-animation) is a prerequisite for advanced garden incantations. Essentially bringing things to life that shouldn't be alive (animation), and pausing life for those things that should be busy living (de-animation), shows



Double, double toil and trouble, fire burn and fountains bubble. Eye of newt and cluck of hen old fountains become new again!



necessary flexibility in imagination and proper charm control. Re-animation, on the other hand, is a formidable incantation that, when utilized, has the power to magnify effects of any other magic used within the space.

As our visitor is deciding which way to proceed, they notice a waterfall spilling into a depression in the patio, and suddenly the surface of the patio has come to life with the patterns of waves.



So close but yet so far this pair of lovers frozen in time long for the curse to be broken so life can begin anew.

The force of these waves has washed away the stone walkway our visitors have been following. As these waves crash against a virtual headland, represented in our garden by an organic outcropping of stairs, the animation charm is completed.

After recovering from the purposeful distractions, our visitor will notice that the old stone walkway actually does continue beyond the waterfall. They will find it leads to the remnants of a decaying brick structure whose original use is still unknown. Here they will make acquaintances with Dick and Jane, a woeful couple frozen in time amidst an urban waterfall landscape. Casual observers would call them statues, but visitors well versed in the de-animation charm will know that the real truth is much more intriguing.

As conversation with Dick and Jane grows tiresome, our visitor will notice that our pathway ultimately leads to what appears to be a formal pool of sorts. Only those brave enough to shed their shoes and wade in its waters will know this is the very source of re-animation — a proverbial fountain of youth. Sitting in the lobes of the pool, with the natural waterfall rumbling beside you, your old

life force is overflowing the whitewashed cement walls, and a new energy of wonder and imagination is replacing it. The powerful wizard who acts as warden and protector of this garden knows these secrets all too well, but still he lets all the muggles believe it's just a great way to beat the summer heat in Charleston.

Pillar 4: Time Travel

All enchanted gardens must possess the three core directions of movement: movement through space, movement through emotion and movement through time. Moving our subjects through the manipulation of time is an essential tool for transporting visitors into the magical realm. Use of layers to create a timeline of events within the space allows visitors to access their own imaginations. Any wizard worth their wand will assure you that imagination is the very lifeblood of magic.

Layers of brickwork have gone into the creation of this space. Some walls are part brick and part rock. These have their origins deep in time. Later, walls of solid brick have been erected atop these ancient foundations. Time passes on, and these structures are inevitably wanting for repair, and so they are patched and



An enchanting view from the fountain of youth towards the home.

coated over with plaster. Eventually, as do all things, these structures too bow to the relentless punishment of time as they crumble in place. Opportunistic plants take hold in any nook available and hold on for dear life. Some thrive and others struggle. Some are old plants and some are newly sprouted. The only story they tell is that one day all of these so-called permanent structures left by the hands of men will be consumed by the sea of greenery and the insatiable hunger of time.

Conclusions

Whether our visitor believes in magic or not, we have a duty as witches and wizards of water, dirt and stone. Our duty is to transport the willing — and especially the unwilling — to a place of imagination. It is not enough to wow them with colors and shapes; we must have them interact with our creation on an emotional level and come away with a heightened sense of curiosity.

The truth is: magic is very real. Anytime someone spends more time creating something than anyone could reasonably expect, magic can happen. Some label it passion; others might call it soul. We wizards see fit to call it by its real name: magic. ✨

About the Author & Contractor

This project was brought to life by Darby Vedder, owner and designer of Cardinal Pond Design LLC in Charleston, South Carolina, in collaboration with Cesar Rodriguez of Alvina Hardscapes LLC.

The story is told through the lens of Mr. Underhill, a nomadic student of the aquatic arts and self-proclaimed “waterfall wizard, 4th class,” who was serving as an adjunct professor during the Winter 2024–2025 session when the vision first took shape. Ever grateful for that experience, he continues to carry its influence into his work in villages far and wide.

Are you magic-curious? Send us an Owl @ <https://www.cardinalpond-design.com/certified-aquascape-contractors>

Author

Mr. Underhill

is a nomadic student of the aquatic arts. A waterfall wizard 4th class he is likely



plying his trade in a village near you. He had the pleasure of serving as adjunct professor during the Winter session of 2024/2025 when this project was conceived and is ever grateful for that opportunity.

Contractor

Darby Vedder of



Cardinal Pond Design and Landscapes practices his craft in the Charleston SC Area.

Working with a group of magical and non magical beings he and his team are ready in a spell to help you make magic happen in your space wherever you call home.

FROM EGGS TO ECOSYSTEMS



From bold to bashful—Dreads the Polish, a watchful Barred Rock, and a sly Silkie, showing off just a bit of the variety found beyond the pond.

It all comes together on a koi farm

by **Ellen Kloubec,**
Kloubec Koi Farm

Do you hear that rustling and cackling sound over there, beyond the pond?

If you're visiting a koi farm for the first time, you might expect the soundtrack to be rippling water, the hum of filtration, the occasional splash of a curious koi or

a quiet conversation about water quality.

But on our koi farm, there's another chorus happening just out of view—feathers fluffing, hens negotiating breakfast and one particularly dramatic rooster who believes he's in charge of, well, everything.

His name is Avant-Garde. And yes, he lives up to it.

He's flamboyant, proud



Different colors, different sizes—no two are ever quite alike... just like koi.

and just a little too cocky for his own good, strutting around like he owns the place, which, in his mind, he absolutely does.

And he's not alone.

We also have Chicken Little, Chicken Noodle, Chicken Alfredo, Putsie, Dreads and Sweat-Pants—a rooster whose fluffy gray legs look exactly like he's wearing a comfortable pair of gray sweatpants, especially when he bends forward to peck the ground!

Welcome to the chicken situation.

Not a Chicken Operation (Just a Chicken Situation)

We are not running a commercial egg operation. We have about 17 hens. This is not a system. This is... a chicken situation.

Like a lot of things on a farm, the chickens started somewhere between intention and "this seemed like a good idea at the time." Somehow along the way, they became part of daily life.

They're not just for eggs. They're what I like to call pets with benefits.

They each have personalities, opinions and very strong feelings about where they should lay their eggs. More often than not, that means several hens bickering over the exact same nesting box, as if there aren't plenty of other perfectly good options available.

We gather eggs, yes, but we also laugh at them, chase them (occasionally) and talk about them more than we probably should. I was elated the first time we got a blue egg—I showed it to everyone.

And no, we can't possibly eat all the eggs. So they are shared with family, friends, even the mailman, and that's honestly the best part of having backyard chickens.

And just to round out the humor of it all, one Christmas I received not one, but two chicken cookbooks as gifts. Everyone thought it was hilarious. Me, not so much.

The Great Chick Chase

Due to recent bird flu outbreaks, a chick shortage became very real. And since chickens don't exactly have the

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THE DEEP END

PODCAST WITH ERIC TRIPLETT

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longest life expectancy, I found myself down to just a few “old gals.”

That wasn’t going to cut it. I needed more chickens.

Spring in the Midwest means chick days at local farm stores—shipments from reputable producers, limited windows and high demand.

And on a family farm, everyone gets involved. Our granddaughter was right there alongside me, checking schedules, riding along and helping in the hunt. We had more fun with it than we probably should have.

I became a full-blown chick tracker, calling stores, checking arrivals and chasing varieties.

If they had what I wanted, I was in the truck and on the road. The Chick Chase was on.

With the shortage, chicks sold out in less than an hour. You had to move fast.

I was thrilled to find some of the varieties I wanted, especially the blue egg layers, Americana types that had been on my list.

And it reinforced something we believe strongly: quality starts at the source. Whether it’s chicks or koi, where they come from matters.

Eggs Are Eggs... Until They’re Not

At a glance, an egg is an egg, right? But on a farm that raises both koi and chickens, that comparison only goes so far.

Chicken eggs are familiar, tangible, something you collect in a basket and crack into a pan.

Koi eggs are something



Twins! A double-yolk egg—because apparently one just isn’t always enough.

else entirely—tiny, nearly invisible at first glance, and they represent years of selective breeding, planning and intention.

Some eggs we eat. Some eggs we protect like treasure and build an entire future around.

Chickens come in countless breeds—different feather patterns, egg colors, temperaments and quirks. Koi are no different—endless varieties, each with unique color patterns and characteristics that make them one of a kind.

And just like Lay’s potato chips, you can’t have just one.

Backyard Chaos vs. Farm Precision

If you’ve ever had koi in a backyard pond, you may have experienced the ultimate pond chaos: a natural spawn.

You walk outside in the morning and immediately know something is different.

Before you even see it, you smell it.

It’s not subtle.

The water looks off—foamy, cloudy, a little questionable—and the smell hits you. Strong. Unmistakable. Not exactly what you’d call “fresh pond air.”

And then it clicks. They spawned.

Fish are thrashing. Water is churning. Plants are getting beat up. It’s chaotic. It’s messy. And it happens whether you planned for it or not.

For a backyard pond owner, it’s equal parts fascinating and alarming. And once you’ve experienced it, you don’t forget it.

That’s not how we do it on the koi farm.

Here, spawning is controlled, intentional and carefully managed from start to finish. We select the parent fish. We hand strip both the female and male Oyagoi (Japanese parent koi).

The eggs are fertilized and incubated indoors in strictly controlled systems, where we manage water quality, oxygen, temperature and egg health every step of the way.

They hatch under watchful eyes, not in a pond full of chaos. A completely different approach.

Volume vs. Value

A hen gives you an egg a day. Reliable. Predictable.

Koi are a different story entirely.

When koi spawn, they produce thousands, sometimes tens of thousands, of eggs at a time.

One fills a basket. The other fills entire systems.

But more eggs doesn’t just mean more. It means more responsibility.

Not every fish will develop the way you want. It takes experience and a trained eye to recognize potential.

It’s not about producing more. It’s about producing better.

More Than “Just Farming”

From the outside, it’s easy to picture a quiet farm.

But in reality, phones are ringing, orders are moving, marketing and production decisions are being made,



Avant-Garde, our resident rooster, fully convinced he’s in charge of the entire operation... all day—every day.

and systems are constantly being monitored.

And somewhere in the middle of it all, someone is still chasing a chicken.

Every day involves decisions—what to feed, how much, what to adjust, what to watch.

You learn to notice the small things—behavior, water clarity, koi activity and subtle changes.

Because producing a healthy, hardy koi doesn’t happen by accident.

It takes experience, consistency and a deep understanding of water, biology and environment.

Kloubec Koi Farm operates on a Century Farm that has been in the family for over 100 years, and we’ve been in business since 1981. This isn’t a start-up. It’s decades of experience.

We’re not just raising fish. We’re managing ecosystems.

What Chickens Teach Us

Even though the scale and purpose are completely different, chickens still manage to teach us a few things that apply directly to raising koi.

Consistency matters. Environment matters. Daily rituals matter.

Cluckin' Questions (From Beyond the Pond)



Why are there chickens at a koi farm?

Because this isn't just a business—it's a real Midwestern farm. A small flock of backyard chickens has always been part of farm life. And these days, backyard chickens are all the rage, whether you planned for them or not.

Which eggs are harder to manage—koi or chicken?

Koi eggs, without question. They stick to everything—your hands, your clothes, your hair, everything. Chicken eggs are a little more polite about the whole situation.

Do the chickens actually serve a purpose?

Eggs, yes, but mostly entertainment. They also help with insects and contribute natural fertilizer, but let's be honest, they're part of the daily show.

Do you have a favorite chicken?

That depends on the day and which one isn't causing trouble. But Avant-Garde would tell you he's the favorite all day, every day. Loudly. Repeatedly.

What's the biggest similarity between raising koi and chickens?

The environment matters. Get it right, and everything thrives. Get it wrong, and you'll know pretty quickly—if you know what we mean.

Why do all the hens want the same nesting box?

We're still trying to figure that out. Apparently, out of all available options, there is always exactly one "correct" spot, and every hen agrees.

The principle stays the same: take care of the environment, and the animals respond. You get out what you put into it.

Get it right, and things thrive. Get it wrong—and you'll know pretty quickly.

Farm Life Has a Sense of Humor (Sometimes Dark)

One Christmas morning, everything was exactly what you'd picture—coffee in hand, looking out over a fresh dusting of snow. Calm. Quiet. Peaceful.

And then someone asked, "Where's Ivy?"

Ivy, our Springer Spaniel. Our very enthusiastic bird dog.

Well, she had found the young pullets. And she was in their pen, playing.

What followed was a full sprint across the snow, in pajamas and boots, trying to rescue chickens and reprimand the dog at the same time.

It was chaos. And not the good kind.

Some of the young chickens didn't survive. Several were injured. One, who lived on with a limp, earned the name Gimpy.

Around here, we refer to that morning (somewhat grimly) as the Christmas Day Massacre. It wasn't funny at the time, and this wasn't the only incident involving dog and chickens.

So, when it came to correcting Ivy's enthusiasm, let's just say her training program may have been an old-school method, which could have involved the dog, her collar and her prey for a very specific period of time.

Nothing harmful, just deeply humbling.

And no, you probably won't find this method in today's dog

training manuals.

But on a farm, sometimes lessons are learned a little differently.

And it worked. Ivy was completely reformed. Chickens simply did not exist in her world any longer. She wouldn't even look at them.

The Egg Perspective

If you step back and really look at it, both koi eggs and chicken eggs represent potential.

One becomes breakfast. Maybe a shared carton, never quite the same twice, with browns, beiges and the occasional blue or green egg.

The other becomes living art, a fish that will grow, develop and one day be the highlight of someone's pond; a real show-stopper they'll be proud of.

Same starting point—an egg.

But what happens next is entirely different.

One is immediate. One is long-term.

One feeds a morning. The other becomes something people enjoy for years.

And yet both are valuable in their own way.

That's farm life. It's not always pretty. It's not always polished. But it's always real.

More Than Just Fish

Raising koi is what we do. But farm life is everything that happens around it—the chickens, the mud, the routines, the long days and the unexpected chaos.

It's easy to look at the koi farm and see only the finished product—beautiful koi fish, mirror-surfaced ponds and the entire operation. But behind it

all is a real place, with real people—a hardworking family and, yes, a handful of chickens that were never meant to be anything more than a footnote, a small part of our story.

It's the unexpected experiences that don't make it into the business plans but make up the story behind the numbers and between the lines. They're the special times you never planned, but will never forget.

At the end of the day, this isn't just about fish or chickens. It's about raising something from the very beginning and seeing it through.

Sometimes the best farm stories aren't the ones you plan. They're the ones you survive.

And that's just a peek at Kloubec Koi Farm... Beyond the Pond. ☞

About the Author

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

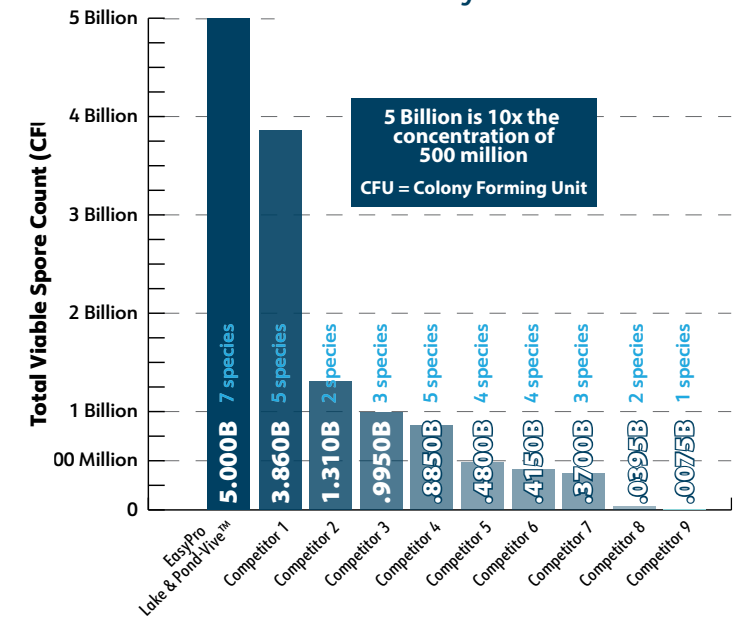


Ellen loves all things koi. She enjoys Koi Shows & Watergarden Tradeshows where she has built lasting friendships. Many hobbyists and celebrities have relied on Ellen when looking for the perfect koi. Ellen hand-selected the Kloubec breeder fish while in Japan. The koi spawning season is her favorite time of year when the breeders are indoors in the hatchery. "Experimenting with different pairings is a passion. It's so rewarding to harvest beautiful little koi and see your vision come to life." Additionally, Ellen enjoys being with her family and their dogs, you'll even find pictures of them on the Kloubec website!

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THE POWER

of the

Pond Edge

Why shallow water plants matter

by **Joe Summers,**
 Chalily Garden Center

When you picture a beautiful pond, what do you think of? Water lilies in bloom. A bubbling stream. Reflections of blue skies and green trees. Bright fish moving below the waterline.

Behind that picture-perfect scene, something else is happening—quietly, at the water's edge.

The Overlooked Zone That Does the Heavy Lifting

Shallow water plants, also called marginal plants, occupy that narrow but critical zone where land meets water. They grow with their roots submerged and their foliage above the surface, forming a living transition between two environments. They're often treated as decorative accents. In reality, they're doing some of the most important work in the pond.

The plants I'm talking about include pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), cattail (*Typha*



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spp.), water iris (*Iris* spp.), arrowhead (*Sagittaria* spp.), rush (*Juncus* spp.), sweetflag (*Acorus* spp.)—many think of them as finishing touches. They're actually infrastructure.

These plants act as natural filters, stabilizers and food sources for the pond (and the people around it—more on that later). They influence water clarity, protect pond structure and expand what a water garden can offer beyond aesthetics. In many ways, they are the difference between a pond that looks great for a season and one that stays balanced for years.

Understanding how shallow water plants function is one of the most important steps in building a successful pond. Let's dive in.



Pickerelweed in bloom at a planted pond edge. The shallow zone is filtering water, stabilizing the bank, and supporting life, all at once.

Nutrient Control Starts at the Edge

From the moment you fill a pond, nutrients start building up.

Decomposing plant material, fish waste and runoff all introduce nitrogen and phosphorus into the water. Those nutrients feed algae, which is fast, opportunistic and very good at getting there first.

Shallow water plants compete for those same nutrients. Their roots pull nitrogen and phosphorus directly out of the water and sediment, storing them in their roots and leaves before algae can take over.

The effect is real and measurable. In constructed wetland research, cattail (*Typha* spp.) has shown ammonia-nitrogen removal rates above 90 percent in some systems. That's a significant number.

There's a fish connection here, too. When water quality drops, fish feel it. Research shows that when nitrogen builds up, fish feed less, stress more and become more vulnerable.



Cattail (*Typha* spp.) at the water's edge. Actively pulling nutrients from the water, anchoring soil, and supporting wildlife all season long.

A planted marginal zone and healthy fish aren't competing priorities—they're connected ones.

One thing worth knowing: when marginals die back and decompose in place, those nutrients return to the water. Cut them back before fall and remove the material. The plants did the work all season—you don't want to put it back.

Holding the Line: Erosion Control That Works

Erosion doesn't typically announce itself.

It happens gradually, a little soil at the waterline, a bank that slowly softens, an edge that wasn't quite where it used to be.

The shoreline is where wave action, changing water levels and runoff all converge. Without the right plants holding it together, that edge quietly loses ground season after season.

Pond edge plants hold it together. Iris, pickerelweed, cattail and rush produce dense, interlocking root networks that weave through soil particles and bind them together. They function like a living fabric through the soil.

Above ground, the stems and leaves absorb wave energy before it reaches exposed soil. Every wave that breaks against a stand of pickerelweed instead

of bare soil is a small erosion event that didn't happen. Multiply that across a season and the difference is substantial.

And the roots don't take a season off. The above-ground portion dies back in winter, but the root network stays intact. The protection continues year-round.

Build the Edge, and Life Shows Up

Plant the edge and the wildlife will follow.

The shallow water zone creates the conditions wildlife is looking for: places to land, shelter for juvenile fish, egg-

laying sites for amphibians and food for pollinators.

Did you know dragonflies are aquatic insects? They spend most of their lives, sometimes years, as larvae underwater, living among plants and in the silt of the shallow zone. The adult you see gliding over the pond surface spent years in the habitat you planted.

Frogs and toads carry a similar message. A toad's skin absorbs chemicals, pesticides and pollutants from its environment, making an abundant toad population a strong sign your pond is in good shape.

Structure matters as much as water quality. Gentle, sloping margins give amphibians easy entry and exit. Emergent stems provide egg-laying sites. The root systems of marginal plants create cover for invertebrates and small fish, the base of the pond's food chain. A 2025 study across more than 150 ponds in Europe found that shallow ponds with better water quality and planted margins supported significantly greater amphibian species richness. Better structure at the edge means more life in and around the pond.

Pollinators find it, too. Pickerelweed draws native bees consistently through its long bloom season. Blue flag iris brings early-season visitors. And two natives worth knowing well: lizard's tail (*Saururus cernuus*) and white water hibiscus (*Hibiscus lasiocarpus*).



White Water Hibiscus (*Hibiscus lasiocarpus*) in bloom. A native pollinator plant and one of the showiest options for a planted pond edge.

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Shaun Lindley McAlester, OK



Lizard's tail is a North American perennial that thrives in shallow water and shadier spots where many marginals struggle. Its white, fragrant flowers and lush heart-shaped foliage make it a favorite, and its habit of forming large colonies over time means it does serious work as a planted margin.

White water hibiscus is one of the showiest native plants you can put at a pond edge. Blooming July through September with flowers up to 6 inches across, it serves as a nectar source for butterflies and a critical pollen source for native bees, continuing the relationship between flower and bee that has been going on for generations.

Plants That Feed the Pond—and You

Some of the hardest-working pond plants can also feed you.

Several of the best shallow water plants for water quality and erosion control are also edible.

Arrowhead, also called duck potato (*Sagittaria latifolia*), produces starchy tubers, often compared to small potatoes when cooked or water chestnuts when raw. An important food source for many Native American peoples, it's also a reliable marginal plant, thriving in shallow water while stabilizing soil and supporting overall pond health.

In spring, the young cattail (*Typha* spp.) shoots can be harvested and eaten fresh or cooked. They have a mild, cucumber-like flavor. The immature flower spikes can be prepared similarly to corn, and later in the season, the pollen can be collected and used as a flour supplement. At the same time, cattail is actively pulling nutrients from the water, anchoring soil and supporting wildlife. Few plants do more in one place.

Taro (*Colocasia* spp.) belongs in this conversation, too. Grown in shallow, standing or slow-moving water, it produces edible corms and large leaves often used in cooking. In traditional Hawaiian systems, taro was grown in flooded terraces called lo'i kalo, not just for food production but as part of a managed water system that filtered water



Arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*) in bloom. It stabilizes pond margins, filters nutrients, and produces starchy edible tubers.

and supported surrounding ecosystems.

It's hard to find another group of plants that does this much in one place.

One important note before you start harvesting aquatic crops: aquatic plants are bioaccumulators. Their ability to clean water means they also absorb what's in it. Harvest only from ponds with known water quality, and always positively identify plants before eating.

Designing the Edge for Long-Term Success

What makes the edge possible?

A newly filled pond can look clean and finished, but without planting at the edge, nutrients begin to build and algae often gets there first. Nothing is in place to compete with it yet.

That's where that shallow zone comes in.

Creating a shelf or ledge around the perimeter gives these plants a place to live. Without that space, they don't really have anywhere to establish.

When that zone is planted, the whole system responds. Plants begin intercepting nutrients right away. The water settles in faster. The edges hold

together.

From there, it's less about adding more and more plants and more about how they're arranged.

A planted edge works best when it carries around the pond and has some variation to it. Mixing heights and textures—upright plants, broader leaves and finer foliage—creates a more natural transition from land to water and gives different types of growth a place to establish.


A single plant repeated everywhere can function, but a mix tends to feel more complete, look more natural and support a wider range of life at the edge.

That's really what this comes down to. The edge works when you make space for it.

Don't Overlook the Edge

It's where plants take hold. Where nutrients are put to work. Where the bank holds together instead of washing away. And where insects, amphibians and pollinators find what they need.

Give those plants a place to grow, and the whole system works better.

The long-term success of a pond is built at the edges. 

IWGS 2026 Symposium Coming to St. Louis



The International Waterlily & Water Gardening Society will hold its annual symposium in St. Louis, Missouri, August 18–21, 2026.

The program includes exclusive tours of the Missouri Botanical Garden during peak water lily bloom season, visits to regional parks and public gardens featuring aquatic plantings, and a research and innovation day at leading plant science institutions.

For anyone working with water plants professionally or as a passion, it's one of the best gatherings in the industry.

For more information, visit iwgs.org/symposium

About the Author

Joe Summers is a horticulturist and the founder of Chalily, a garden center specializing in retail and online sales of water lilies, lotus, and shallow water plants and more. With decades of hands-on experience, he focuses on helping customers build healthier, more balanced ponds through thoughtful planting.





WATER GARDEN EXPO

2026

AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE INDUSTRY'S SIGNATURE EVENT

by **Lauren Nolan**,
POND Trade Magazine

A Stronger-Than-Ever Vendor Lineup

One of the most noticeable differences in 2026 was the expanded vendor presence. The tradeshow floor was not only full, it was energized.

The Water Garden Expo 2026 delivered on the depth of its education, the strength of its vendor presence and the powerful sense of industry pride woven throughout the event.

It was especially meaningful to see so many familiar faces from the brands that continue to shape and push the pond industry forward. From filtration leaders and pump manufacturers to treatment companies, software providers and service solutions, the diversity of vendors reflected how much the industry continues to evolve.

From the moment attendees walked into the tradeshow, it was clear this was not just another year. The Expo felt bigger, more connected and more forward-thinking than ever before.



What stood out most was not just the number of vendors, but the quality of engagement. Booths were active, educational and hands-on. Conversations went deeper than surface-level product pitches. Vendors and contractors alike were focused on solutions, efficiency and long-term growth.

There was a clear sense that manufacturers and professionals are working more collaboratively than ever before, not just selling products, but building better businesses together.

With more vendors than in previous years, the Expo created even greater opportunities for attendees to discover new tools, explore partnerships and stay ahead of what is next.

A Speaker Lineup That Delivered Real Value

The educational programming remained a cornerstone of the event, featuring industry leaders backed by companies actively shaping the space:

- Bob Turner, Summit Coaching & Consulting
- Bubba Hogan, Midsouth Ponds and Online Training Vault

- Dave Duensing, Aquatic Construction Service
- BJ Linger, Outdoor Network Services

This combination of field experience and company-backed insight made each session not just educational, but grounded in real application.

Sessions and Classes

The 2026 schedule stood out for how clearly it connected education with the companies leading innovation in each category.

Leadership, Systems and Business Growth

Seat • Edge • Standard: A Practical Framework for Contractor Leadership, Summit Coaching & Consulting

Leadership in the Moment of Truth: Presence • Pressure • Proof, Summit Coaching & Consulting

From Chaos to Control: Systems and SOPs That Actually Get Used, Summit Coaching & Consulting

Profit Is a Standard: Job Costing, Pricing and the Professional Mindset, Midsouth Pond

Leveraging Your Team for Maximum Effect, Summit Coaching & Consulting
Better Together: Personal Growth and Community in Business, Pond Professionals Alliance

These sessions emphasized a major shift: pond professionals are becoming structured business operators in addition to builders.

Technical Training, Equipment and Installation

- Elevate PondGard Training: Seaming, Patching and Penetrations, PondGard
- Choosing the Right Pump for Your Pond Made Easy, Anjon Manufacturing
- The Next Generation of Koi Pond Filtration, OASE
- More Than You Ever Wanted To Know About Hiblow Air Pumps, Hiblow USA
- Wetland Filtration Explained: From Sizing to 2026 Solutions, Atlantic-Oase
- Anjon Fountain Demo, Anjon Manufacturing



These classes delivered hands-on, applicable knowledge, reinforcing both fundamentals and emerging technologies.

Marketing, Sales and Customer Growth

- Play to the Crowd: Marketing Your Water Feature and Pond/Lake Service Business, Outdoor Network Services
- Make Your Profits, Lawns and Customer Satisfaction Take Off, Midsouth Ponds

A clear takeaway was that marketing and positioning are no longer optional, they are essential to growth.

Expansion, Services and Revenue Streams

- Beyond the Pond: Expanding into Lake

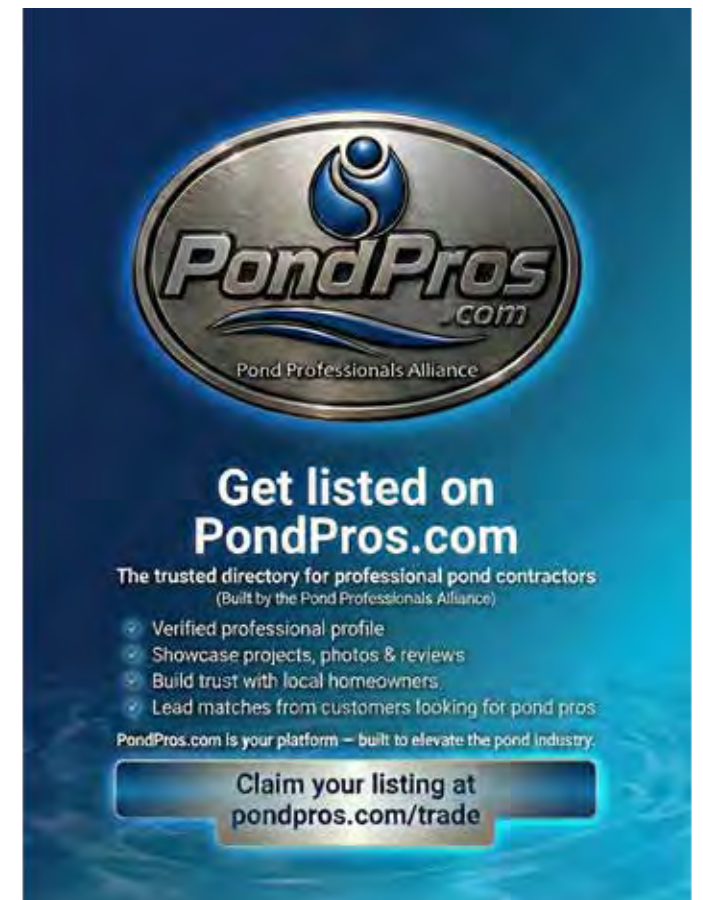
Management, Truxor

- Revamp Your Lake Management Approach with Truxor, Truxor
- Selling Fountains and Aeration to Expand Your Bottom Line, Kasco Marine
- Take Your Garden Fountain Systems to New Heights, Anjon Manufacturing
- OASE Lake Therapy: Superior Results for Lakes, Now for Koi Ponds Too, OASE

These sessions highlighted one of the biggest industry trends: diversification equals growth.

Design and Craftsmanship

- Adventure Ponds: Where Wonder, Water and Craft Collide, Aquatic Construction Services

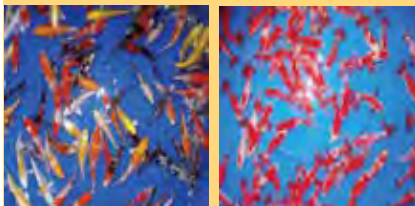


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- Focusing on the Artistic Elements of Waterfalls and Streams, Aquatic Construction Services
- Transitioning Into More Complex Water Feature Projects, Aquatic Construction Services

These reinforced that artistry remains at the core of exceptional water feature design.

Community and Connection Beyond the Classroom

Beyond the sessions and tradeshow floor, some of the most meaningful moments happened in more relaxed settings throughout the event. The Pond Professionals Alliance hosted a dinner that brought attendees together for an evening of food, drinks and connection.

It was a chance to unwind, play cards, share stories and enjoy plenty of laughs with others in the industry. These moments, away from the formal structure of the Expo, are often where relationships are strengthened and new friendships are formed.

That same sense of connection carried

into the lunchroom and shared dining spaces throughout the event. Whether it was grabbing breakfast before sessions or sitting down for lunch between classes, some of the most meaningful conversations happened over a meal. Ideas were exchanged, challenges were discussed and connections were built in an organic, unstructured way.

Water Garden Expo is filled with these opportunities. It is not just about what happens in the classrooms, but what happens in between. The casual conversations, the shared tables and the time spent together all contribute to a stronger, more connected industry.

Final Takeaway

Water Garden Expo 2026 was not just about education, products or growth. It was a powerful reminder of what truly drives this industry forward: connection and collaboration.

What stood out most was not any single session or booth, but the way the entire event came together. Contractors shared ideas openly. Manufacturers listened just as much as they presented.



Competitors became collaborators. Conversations that started in classrooms carried onto the tradeshow floor, into happy hour and beyond the event itself.

Water Garden Expo continues to serve as more than a meeting place. It is a catalyst. It strengthens relationships, sparks new ideas and reinforces a shared purpose among everyone involved.

As the industry continues to grow and evolve, one thing is clear. It is not just about building better ponds. It is about building a stronger, more connected community behind them.

A special thank you to Randy Stewart and the entire Pondliner team for hosting and bringing this event to life. The level of effort, organization and care that goes into creating an experience like this does not go unnoticed. It is a big part of what makes Water Garden Expo so impactful year after year.

Before closing the chapter on 2026, mark your calendars. Water Garden Expo 2027 returns Feb. 10–12, 2027. If this year was any indication, it is one you will not want to miss. ☺

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Water Artisans of the Year 2nd Runner Up

This year, we are proud to highlight the Second Runner Up for Water Artisans of the Year, expanding the platform to showcase even more exceptional work across the industry. By recognizing additional projects, we're able to celebrate a broader range of creativity, craftsmanship and innovation that deserves to be seen. The more work we share, the more we inspire—raising the standard and fueling growth across the entire pond community.

SECOND RUNNER UP BEST PONDLESS



**JORGE
CASTELLANOS**

**AQUASCAPE CREATIONS
SAN FRANCISCO, CA - USA**

- Complete rebuild of an existing feature to meet the homeowner's vision
- Repurposed on-site boulders with ~4 tons of additional stone
- Rock layout and streambed redesigned for natural flow and movement
- Integrated aquatic plants and underwater lighting for a seamless day-to-night feature



SECOND RUNNER UP FOUNTAINS & FORMAL FEATURES



**HUNTER
MCGUIRT**

**AQUA-SPRINGS
HOUSTON, TX - USA**

- Modern courtyard pond designed to complement the home's architecture
- Floating stepping stones with integrated lighting for a hovering effect at night
- Compact footprint thoughtfully engineered near the home and patio
- Tile-faced block walls and custom cast-stone coping for a crisp, contemporary finish
- Three copper spillway spouts adding movement, sound, and warmth
- Hidden wetland filtration system integrated into the raised back wall



SECOND RUNNER UP MOST NATURALISTIC



**JOEL
MCEWEN**

**AQUA VITAE POOLS
SAN FRANCISCO, CA - USA AND
LISBON, PORTUGAL**

- Naturalistic hillside poolscape designed to blend seamlessly with the terrain
- 500 m² of earth reshaped and 200+ tons of local limestone hand-set
- Multi-zone ecosystem: toddler pool, tiered swim areas, 3m diving basin, wetland filtration
- Stone cave waterfall with adjustable spring-fed cascades
- Spa soaking tubs integrated into the biological filtration system
- Smart pump circulation & dual UV systems for energy-efficient clarity



SECOND RUNNER UP RECREATIONAL PONDS



**JOE
BRENNER**

**ARIZONA AQUASCAPES
GILBERT, AZ - USA**

- 25' x 25' recreational pond with a natural beach entry
- 75-ft cascading hillside waterfall with multiple pools
- Stepping-stone crossing and natural stone bridges
- Built with locally sourced moss rock & mahogany stone
- Mountain retreat setting with gardens and alpacas nearby



**JOIN THE WATY 2026
AWARDS COMMITTEE**

SCAN TO JOIN

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Help determine award categories
- Establish contest criteria
- Develop the scoring rubric
- Assist in judge selection
- Ensure fairness, relevance, and industry alignment

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE WATY AWARDS WHILE MAINTAINING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF FAIRNESS, CREDIBILITY, AND DISTINCTION.



**2026 WATY
CATEGORY VOTING**

SCAN TO VOTE

INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS ARE INVITED TO:

- Review the list of past award categories
- Vote for the categories they would like to see represented
- Submit a write-in suggestion if they believe a new category should be added

FINAL AWARD CATEGORIES WILL BE ANNOUNCED
JULY 2026!



Water Artisans
of the Year

Presented at Water Garden Expo 2026

One of the most meaningful moments of the event was announcing the Water Artisans of the Year Awards.

As the awards celebrated their 10th anniversary, it was an incredible honor to stand on that stage and recognize the talent, creativity and dedication that continue to shape the industry. Over the past decade, these awards have grown into something far greater than a competition. They have become a reflection of where the industry is and where it is going.

With more than 70 entries this year, the level of craftsmanship, innovation and storytelling behind each submission was remarkable. From highly technical builds to artistic, experience-driven water features, every entry represented a unique perspective and a deep commitment to the craft.

Announcing the winners in that room, surrounded by peers who understand the work behind each project, brought a different level of emotion to the moment. It was not just applause. It was respect. It was recognition from professionals who know what it takes to bring these projects to life.

What stood out most was the shared pride across the audience. Whether someone was walking away with an award or simply attending, there was a collective appreciation for how far the industry has come and for the individuals pushing it forward each day.

Equally important is what these awards represent for the next generation of builders. For newer contractors and emerging professionals, the Water

Artisans of the Year set a clear benchmark, showing what is possible when craftsmanship, creativity and intention come together. They provide a tangible goal that elevates not just individual projects, but entire careers.

The takeaway for newer builders is clear. Builders should pay attention to the details, push beyond standard builds, think about the full experience rather than just the function, and continuously refine their process and artistry.

These awards do not just celebrate excellence. They help create it. They motivate builders to step outside their comfort zones, take pride in their work and raise their standards year after year.

On a personal level, it was a full-circle moment. Helping spotlight these artisans and celebrate their work on that stage is a responsibility that carries great meaning. It reinforces the importance of continuing to elevate the voices, the projects and the people that define the industry.

At the end of the day, the Water Artisans of the Year Awards are not just about recognizing great work. They are about raising the standard for what is possible and inspiring the next generation of builders to go even further.

Congratulations to this year's winners. Their work continues to inspire and elevate the entire industry.



Fitz's Fish Ponds Koi Fest Celebrates 5th Anniversary!



Fitz's Fish Ponds (FFP) is excited to announce that tickets are now officially available for Koi Fest 2026, the company's highly anticipated annual celebration of koi, ponds and outdoor living. Hosted at FFP's Milford, New Jersey headquarters, Koi Fest has grown into one of the

largest and most immersive koi events in the United States.

Koi Fest 2026 will bring together hobbyists, industry professionals and families for a full weekend of experiences, including a Japanese-

style koi auction, the Tri-State ZNA Koi Show, vendor exhibits, educational opportunities and family-friendly activities. Guests can also enjoy food trucks, live entertainment and the chance to win exciting giveaways—including a koi buying trip to Japan.

For those looking for an elevated experience, Special Access Friday tickets offer exclusive behind-the-scenes tours, early access to koi inventory and a sushi and hibachi welcome dinner.

"Koi Fest is all about community and creating an unforgettable experience for anyone passionate about koi and water features," said Brian Fitzsimmons, CEO of Fitz's Fish Ponds.

Tickets are limited and expected to sell quickly. To secure your spot, visit www.fitzfishponds.com/koi-fest-event-2026.

Zeigler Bros. Inc Launches New Koi Line & Packaging



As a long-standing leader in aquaculture nutrition, Zeigler Bros. Inc. combines decades of research collaboration and feed innovation to deliver high-performance diets for aquatic species worldwide. In preparation for the 2026 pond season, the company has launched a new koi and pond fish food line designed to improve fish health while naturally enhancing coloration.

Manufactured in the United States, the lineup consists of three products — Koi Grower, Koi Fancier and Pond Silver — each targeting specific nutritional requirements across life stages. Koi Grower is formulated for juvenile and developing koi, while Koi Fancier serves as a premium maintenance diet for mature koi and contains wheat germ for all-season feeding. Pond Silver is designed for a variety of backyard pond species, including koi, bass and bluegill.

All three diets are nitrogen-preserved to maintain freshness and nutrient stability. Their highly digestible formulations help reduce waste, improve feeding efficiency and support a healthier pond ecosystem. Each formula also includes Vpak, Zeigler Vitality Pak, a proprietary feed additive designed to support immune function and promote gut health.

"Our goal is to provide pond owners with the same level of nutritional precision and quality that we apply across commercial aquaculture," said Priscilla Shirley, sales specialist. "These enhanced koi diets allow hobbyists and professionals to match feed to life stage and performance goals while maintaining pond clarity and fish vitality."

Founded in 1935, Zeigler Bros. Inc. manufactures animal feed for commercial aquaculture, as well as for nontraditional pets and zoo animals, serving both domestic and international markets. For more information, visit www.zeiglerfeed.com or follow the company on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

HIBLOW USA Pond Aeration Kits are available now!

The inventor of the linear diaphragm air pump now offers complete aeration kits designed for ponds up to 1 acre.

While rocking piston aerators have long been the standard for ponds deeper than 6', HIBLOW's energy-efficient linear air pumps—paired with Adjustable Height Diffusers—provide a more cost-effective, user-friendly alternative. With the ability to raise the diffuser(s) up to 3' off the pond bottom, HIBLOW's linear technology can now be used in ponds up to 13' deep—reducing energy costs while delivering quieter operation, easier maintenance, and longer service life. For ponds under 10', the diffuser can be set as low as 11.5", maximizing circulation while gradually breaking down muck without disturbing it throughout the pond.

New 2-valve and 3-valve manifolds feature integrated gate valves for precise airflow control and optimal diffuser balancing. Each also includes a condensation blow-out valve to easily remove moisture from the airline—reducing backpressure and maximizing performance.

HIBLOW's new Pond Aerator Enclosure protects the pump from direct sunlight while allowing proper ventilation, helping maintain cooler operating temperatures and extend pump life.

Learn more about HIBLOW's premium aeration packages: <https://www.hiblow-usa.com/product-finder/pond-aeration-packages/>



New Horizontal Pump Design from EasyPro Expands Installation Flexibility



EasyPro Pond Products is building on a proven foundation with the introduction of its new HTH Series Pumps. A horizontal evolution of the company's widely trusted TH Series Pumps.

Long relied on by contractors for consistent, dependable performance, TH Pumps have earned their place as a go-to solution across a wide range of water feature applications. The new HTH Series builds on that platform with a horizontal configuration designed to deliver increased output and greater flexibility on the jobsite.

In addition to performance gains, HTH Pumps are engineered to integrate more easily into tighter skimmers and vaults. This allows contractors to complete installations more efficiently, without modifying layouts or compromising performance.

TH Pumps earned their reputation by performing reliably in the field year after year. The HTH Series builds on that foundation with a design that enables contractors to deliver that same reliability, with increased performance, across a wider range of skimmers and vaults.

For a closer look at the new HTH Series, including side-by-side comparisons with TH Pumps, readers are encouraged to view EasyPro's center spread advertisement in this issue of Pond Trade or visit EasyPro.com for complete product details.

New Fountains have Joined the Atlantic-Oase Line Up!

Atlantic-Oase expands its decorative fountain lineup with the introduction of Antique Brass Aura Vases and Brass Fountain Spheres, blending artisan craftsmanship with durable, elegant design. Hand-hammered from solid brass, the new fountain spheres are available in 24" and 30" sizes with Antique Brass or Verde Brass finishes. Brass Spheres are also available as all-in-one fountain kits in both the 24" and 30" Sphere sizes, including the pump, Fountain Basin and plumbing kit.

Joining the Aura Vase collection, the new Antique Brass finish adds a timeless, warm aesthetic to both spillway and non-spillway designs. Each vase is handcrafted from solid brass and offered in 24", 32", and 40" sizes, making every piece a unique focal point for fountains, formal spillways, and water features. Available as standalone pieces or in convenient all-in-one kits. The new Antique Brass Aura Vases pair seamlessly with Atlantic's copper-toned WaterWalls, Spillways and Spouts while delivering the durability and elegance expected from premium brass construction.

Learn more about the new fountains here: <https://www.atlantic-oase.com/products/categories/fountain>



Heartland Koi Classic Announces Inaugural Koi Show and Pond Expo in Bixby, Oklahoma

The Heartland Koi Classic is proud to announce its inaugural koi show and pond industry event, taking place June 5-7, 2026, at Hardscape Materials in Bixby, Oklahoma. This three-day event will bring together koi enthusiasts, water garden hobbyists, pond professionals, and families from across the Midwest for a weekend dedicated to the art, beauty, and culture of koi keeping.

The Heartland Koi Classic will feature a non competitive koi show showcasing some of the finest koi from Kodama Koi Farm along with vendor exhibits, educational opportunities, and pond-related products and services. Attendees will have the opportunity to see championship-quality koi up close, meet experienced hobbyists and industry experts, and learn more about building and maintaining ponds and water gardens.

"We're excited to bring a new koi event to the heart of the country," said event organizer Erin Porter. "Our goal is to create a welcoming event for both serious koi hobbyists and people who simply love ponds, gardens, and outdoor living."

The event is expected to draw participants and visitors from across a 500-mile region, including Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Arkansas, Missouri, Colorado, and New Mexico.

Event highlights include: Non competitive koi show featuring high-quality koi from Kodama Koi Farm in Japan. Vendors offering pond supplies, koi, and water garden product. Educational opportunities for pond owners and hobbyists. Family-friendly environment for garden and outdoor enthusiasts. Networking opportunities for koi clubs and water garden societies.



Poposoap 40W Filtration Fountain Nominated for German Innovation Awards 2026

Poposoap has received its first exciting piece of news for 2026: its 40W Filtration Fountain has been nominated for the Excellence in Business to Consumer category in the Gardening & Tools section of the prestigious German Innovation Awards 2026.

The German Innovation Awards, hosted by the German Design Council, recognize groundbreaking products, technologies, and services that deliver real added value to users, businesses, and the environment. Poposoap's nomination signifies that its product has achieved international leadership in innovation, practicality, and commercial value.

"Poposoap's mission is to make creating water features simple and allow more people to enjoy nature. This nomination for the German Innovation Awards is a milestone on our journey," said Ruby, CEO of Poposoap. "We will continue to invest in innovation to drive industry development through continuous innovation. We are not just building products, but redefining how people connect with nature."

This 40W filtered fountain integrates a water pump, filter, and fountain components into a single system, designed for outdoor residential spaces such as patios and ponds. It maintains



water circulation and cleanliness through continuous operation. The unit is reliable for everyday use, requiring no frequent adjustments or parts replacements.

Introducing the New FiltoClear 15500 & 23500

Atlantic-Oase introduces the next generation of FiltoClear pressure filters with the new FiltoClear 15500

and 23500, delivering significantly increased filtration capacity for larger water features. Designed for pond volumes up to 15,000 and 23,500 gallons, these high-performance filters combine mechanical and biological filtration with integrated UVC clarification to maintain clean, clear, and healthy water.



Engineered for convenience and efficiency, the updated FiltoClear models feature Easy Clean Technology with a two-way valve that backflushes debris and directs waste without removing the lid. New 2-inch inlets and outlets support multiple water flow configurations, while a removable, switchable cleaning handle connects to internal rods for thorough foam agitation during maintenance. Four foam densities (10, 20, 30, and 45 ppi) enhance biological filtration, and dual UVC bulbs can be replaced without shutting down the system.

Learn more about the new FiltoClears here! <https://www.atlantic-oase.com/products/categories/water-garden/filtoclear>

Reflections Water Gardens Earns 2026 Platinum Award!

Reflections Water Gardens recently received the 2026 Platinum Award from Landscape Illinois for its work on a project titled Puttin' On the Ritz. This is the highest honor in the entry's special features category. It follows a Gold Award the project received from the state industry association earlier this year. This is the second time the company has received a Platinum Award.

The project in St. Charles, Illinois, was a partnership with Platinum Pool, located in Wheeling, Illinois. The teams transformed a plain backyard into a luxury, resort-style escape inspired by the Ritz-Carlton Orlando. The design features a large limestone grotto with a 13-foot-wide waterfall, smaller secondary cascades and a professional lighting system. To ensure the structure's stability, the team anchored the feature to a reinforced floor using epoxy-coated rebar and 40 cubic yards of concrete backfill.

Reflections Water Gardens also received a Silver Award from Landscape Illinois for its consulting work on Land of Natura in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. Serving as technical consultants for Natura Destinations, the company helped engineer the world's largest naturally filtered waterpark. The 5-acre, 20-foot-deep swimming pond uses a chemical-free system with 4,900 tons of gravel and more than 8,500 feet of piping. The team delivered the project for Land of Natura's public opening in June 2023, despite pandemic-related material shortages.



MARKETPLACE

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Kansas City Water Garden Tour Tickets Now Available!



The Greater Kansas City Water Garden Society invites you to continue the exciting summer of patriotism with the 33rd annual tour Red, White and Bloom on three separate Saturdays in July and August. Each Saturday tour will feature 12 unique water features with lily and lotus blooms exploding in celebration of America's 250th birthday and Kansas City hosting the FIFA World Cup 26. From 9 to 5pm, visitors can meet working plein-air artists at select sites as they reflect on the art of nature. Some homes feature working garden trains, fountains, and sculpture gardens, in a variety of settings and designs.

Tour tickets, good for all 3 Saturdays, are \$15/person. Tickets include maps, addresses, and host written descriptions for each water feature. Many visitors take photos and ask questions of the homeowners about ponds, landscaping challenges and specific plant names. Proceeds from the tour support the KC Water Garden Society service projects for schools and other non-profits. Tickets will be available on Eventbrite May 1st, in time for Mother's Day gift giving, and in local retail garden centers by the first of June.

Tour #1 - July 25, Missouri South, including Jackson and Cass counties.

Tour #2 - August 8, Kansas and Missouri, North of I-70

Tour #3 - August 15, Kansas South of I-70

Look for updates and artists locations on our Facebook page and website, kcwatergardens.com

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