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your ponds and water features should have an auto-fill system. Almost every koi hobbyist has killed their koi from leaving the hose on, is this a possible solution?

34 **Networking Your Way to New Customers**  
*Rick Smith, EasyPro Pond Products*

Knowing where, when, and how to focus marketing plans is extremely important. This industry expert believes that networking will play a key role in these plans. Learn about diversifying and teaming up with others. Includes a list of great ideas for you to explore, to identify new customers.

38 **Nymphaea ‘Scarlet Flame’ Named 2012 Collector’s Aquatic Plant of the Year**  
*IWGS*

Scarlet Flame, a beautiful tropical water lily, is named Collector’s Aquatic Plant of the Year. The Collector’s Aquatic Plant of the Year is a fundraising program for IWGS. See this plant and learn more about this program.

40 **Industry Events – Adding Value to the Trade**  
*Tom Graham, POND Trade Magazine*

We were lucky to be able to attend this year’s Water Garden Expo, a popular distributor show ‘n tell. See what you missed, and enjoy the photos.

46 **IWGS Announces 2012 Aquatic Plants of the Year**  
*IWGS*

Each year the IWGS announces the selection of exceptional aquatic plants in each of these categories: Hardy Water Lily, Tropical Water Lily and Marginal. See the winners here, and consider including some of these award-winning plants in your customers’ water gardens.

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Publisher’s Perspective

NAPP President Mark Krupka

Changes are in the works at NAPP (National Association of Pond Professionals), as long time President Mark Krupka steps down after 4+ years at the helm, turning the reigns over to well known, Warren Thoma, Thoma & Associates, LLC. Thanks for your service to the industry, Mark. To learn more about NAPP, visit their website www.nationalpondpro.com.

Good Start to Spring for Industry

Word around the country seems to be optimistic as winter gave way to an early spring warming trend. If you are not feeling it yet, maybe you should link up with others in the biz, and see what they are doing differently, to catch the spring sales boost, as it peaks.

In This Issue

You will discover how to net koi, is clay something you should be adding to ponds, calculating evaporation and see some beautiful aquatic plants. Carl Petite, Columbia Water Garden, shares his experience with service routes: a great business opportunity.

Can you do more to help your business grow? We hope we can help with fresh thoughts from Rick Smith of EasyPro Pond Products on word of mouth networking.

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Remember to check our website for the most recent press releases, to stay up to date.

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ABC’s of Ponds – This beautifully illustrated hard cover book is packed with pond & water feature fundamentals plus many little known secrets to successful pond keeping! Wholesale pricing is available. Email ABCPonds@gmail.com. www.abc-ponds-book.com

Want to learn the basics about football? Take a look at this book by POND Trade Magazines Editor. Available on Amazon.com - search for Kick Start, Graham.
Aquatic Plant – Water Snowflake

by Jennifer Zuri
Marketing communications manager for Aquascape, Inc.
and President of the International Waterlily and Water
Gardening Society (IWGS)

While it’s a little early to be thinking about snowflakes, it’s perfectly fine to be talking about the dainty Water Snowflake you may have floating in your pond. Water snowflake (Nymphoides spp.) is part of a large family of what are commonly called water lily-like plants because their leaves float at the surface of the water while the roots are anchored in soil below – much like the habit of a water lily.

The plant is constantly reproducing, spreading runners out along the surface of the pond. Like water lettuce, you can pinch off the new plantlets to share with friends and help control growth. Because it’s a hardy grower, the Water Snowflake is great for ponds that suffer from constant algae blooms. The leaves will quickly spread across the water, providing shade and minimizing algae growth.
Popular snowflakes for the water garden include:

**White Water Snowflake, Nymphoides indica**

White Water Snowflake has round, floating, 2-inch leaves that are green with maroon variegation. Because they exchange oxygen on the surface, they need to remain dry and away from the spray of waterfalls and fountainheads. Hardy in Zones 8-11.

**Yellow Water Snowflake, Nymphoides geminata**

Yellow Water Snowflake has very frilly, star-shaped yellow flowers, green leaves, and is hardy in Zones 5-11. This free-flowering plant has a fast-growing, running spreading habit. Ideally it grows in 4 to 24 inches of water.

**Orange Water Snowflake, Nymphoides hydrocharioides**

Native to Australia, this plant has orange, star-shaped flowers and bright green leaves with dark red or brown variegation, and is hardy in Zones 7-11.

**Note:** Some states include Water Snowflake on its list of invasive species. Check with your local government for its invasive species list.

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**About the Author**

Jennifer Zuri is marketing communications manager for Aquascape, Inc. and President of the International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society. Looking for information call Aquascape, Inc. at 866.877.6637 (US) or 866.766.3426 (CAN).

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Evaporation in Ponds, Streams, Waterfalls and Fountains

Water evaporates. It also has been known to leak. The obvious question raised by many new waterfeatures’ owners is: “The water is going down – is it leaking?” A good general rule of thumb is that most waterfeatures will loose approximately 1 inch per week by evaporation.

However, when there is a lower pond and a waterfeature such as a stream or waterfall above it, there is more to it than just looking at the lower pond and measuring the loss.

For example: An upper pond 6’ x 8’, a stream bed 15’ long and about 1’ wide of actual running water, and a lower pond that is only 10’ x 10’. If we actually had exactly one inch of evaporation it would translate to:

| Lower Pond: | 10’ x 10’ = 100 sq. ft., x 1/12 ft. deep = 8.33 cu. ft. | x 7.4805 gal./cu. ft. = 62.3 gallons. |
| Streambed:  | 15’ x 1’ = 15 sq. ft., x 1/12 ft. deep = 1.25 cu. ft. | x 7.4805 gal./cu. ft. = 9.35 gallons. |
| Upper Pond: | 6’ x 8’ = 48 sq. ft., x 1/12 ft. deep = 4 cu. ft. x 7.4805 gal./cu. ft. = 29.2 gallons. |

We now have a total evaporation of 100.85 gallons. But it is only affecting the level in the lower pond, since the pump is keeping the upper pond and streambed full. Therefore, 100.85 gallons divided by 7.4805 = 13.37 cu. ft. divided by 100 sq. ft. = .13 x 12 in./ft. = .16 inches of actual drop in the lower pond for each 1 inch of actual evaporation in the entire system.

Now we have to toss the equation some real variable, such as the “splash factor” in the streambed and waterfall. If it is a nice hot summer day and the water is splashing small droplets onto a hot rock, chances are that it will immediately evaporate rather than run back into the stream. Some, naturally, may actually splash completely out of the system. There might also be a small stick, leaf, plant stem, etc., that for the moment is laying across the edge of the stream and that is wicking some water along it and out of the system. And, do not forget the occasional herd of deer drinking at night, the herd of small neighborhood kids playing, or the large dog taking a swim and taking water out with him.

And, a hot day with low humidity will obviously have a different evaporation rate compared with a cold and damp day.

If the system is completely covered with, for example, cheap clear plastic, making sure that it is all held down on the edges within the system – so that any water splashing or condensing on it will run into the pond system and not outside of it – all evaporation can be eliminated and a much truer picture of “evaporation or leak” can be seen.


For more information about the IPPCA see their website at www.ippca.com.
The build started with the client’s existing 10’ x 12’ pond that had become overgrown with aquatic plants and the koi had outgrown their environment.

**Project:** Create a lifestyle backyard for the client’s enjoyment. Existing pond housed 22 koi ranging from 16” to 30” that needed to be cared for during the construction process. Space for stock piling materials was limited. The water feature had to be low maintenance with an advanced filtration method.

We designed a feature that included two wetlands filtration areas – the first being installed within the lower 16’ x 21’ x 2 ½’ pond and being designed to pull the water down through the root zone of the aquatic plants. The second wetlands was designed as an ‘up-flow’ system located by the starting point of the feature.

The feature has a 27’ long x 4’ wide stream also planted with a wide selection of aquatic plants.

There is a 5 1/2” grade change from the main pond’s water level to the upper waterfall.

The main pond is located next to the client’s existing patio area and a ‘fish tunnel’ and 2 ‘fish caves’ were installed. Three watt LED lighting within the pond was installed to extend the...
Notice the fish tunnel and cave?
night time viewing pleasure. We also installed a large (5’ x 7’) 1.5 ton New York slab rock as a meditation rock close to the waterfalls along with smaller 4’ x 4’ flat slabs to walk along the edge of the pond and for interacting with the koi.

This project involved removing 25 yards of soil off site. We also brought in 22 tons of Fieldstone Boulders ranging in size from 8” – 30” – (8) 3’ x 4’ NY slab rocks, (1) 5’ x 7’ NY slab rock, (24) Large Aquablox, 1 Aquascape BioFalls, (9) 3 watt LED lights, (15) 1 watt LED lights, (1) Aquasurge 5000 GPH pump, (1) 7,000 Aquasurge pump, 80’ of 3” flex pipe, and 45 assorted hardy aquatic plants and lilies, with an additional 15 tropical plants added during the season. Numerous landscape plants including evergreens and perennials were installed throughout the project area. Also a 10’ x 10’ irregular Bluestone patio, natural stone steps, and Pennsylvania Fieldstone retaining walls were installed to create terraces & outside rooms all with views of the waterfeature.

Total time to install project 14 working days with a crew of 7 men.

Equipment (1) Bobcat 341 excavator, (1) S300 Bobcat Skidsteer, (1) Bobcat MT 52 skidsteer.

Total retail cost of project $78,000.00.

Have you built a pond you would like to have featured in POND Trade Magazine?

Contact the editor Cindy Graham at cindy@pondtrademagz.com

Remember high resolution images are important for printed magazines!
Pieter van Westervelt is the General Manager of Premium Aquascapes and has 25+ years in the landscape and aquascape industry. Pieter was recently named the 2011 Pond Builder of the Year. Premium Aquascapes has won numerous awards for their work with waterfeatures and rain water harvesting systems. They can be reached at 800-914-9890 or by visiting their websites as www.premiumaquascapes.com or www.facebook.com/premiumaquascapes.
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If you’ve ever watched a seasoned pro net and bag a koi and thought to yourself, “Looks pretty simple, I could do that,” and if you’ve ever chased a koi around a retail tank with a net until your brow beads up with sweat and your arms are burning and sore, all the while thinking, “I can do this!” then you’re not alone. The process of catching, netting and bagging koi can be a very stressful experience, for both human and fish! But, with the right tools and a little insight you can soon become an expert in the store fish department.

By handling koi the right way you will build confidence and gain credibility with your customers. Koi can become damaged if handled incorrectly. By using the right equipment you will reduce the risk of unnecessary damage to their delicate fins and slime-coat as well as eliminating the stress of being captured and moved.

Tools of the Trade
1. Pan Net
2. Viewing Bowl
3. Poly Bags
4. Sock Net
5. Oxygen
6. Elastic Bands
A pan net is a very shallow net that is used to corral the koi and guide it into a viewing bowl. Use slow and deliberate movements when approaching the desired koi with your net. Quick and jerky movement will make the koi become very alarmed hence darting and fleeing. It is also a good idea to stay very quiet when netting koi as loud voices can result in the same adverse effects. Slowly move the pan net through the water with a left to right (slicing) motion; drag will be reduced and it will glide through the water easily this way. Once you have the desired koi captured bring it to the surface but do not lift the koi out of the water. By tipping the handle upward you can reduce the chance of escape by jumping. Next, rest the rim of the pan net on the edge of a viewing bowl that is partially filled with water. With your free hand tilt the viewing bowl toward the net to allow more water to spill into the bowl by submerging one side. Gently guide the koi out of the pan net and into the viewing bowl simultaneously. The koi will gladly swim into the bowl to escape the net. At first try you may end up with the viewing bowl completely filled with water, but with practice you will become more proficient. Be sure to maintain enough water in the bowl to completely cover the koi’s dorsal fin then allow your customer to inspect the fish.

Next, add a small amount of water into a poly-bag so it is ready to accept the koi. Place the doubled poly-bag in a bucket or another koi viewing bowl for stability. It is a good idea to prepare the poly-bag before you get started with the netting process.

Now you will use a sock net to transfer the koi into the doubled poly-bag for your customer. Start by getting the sock net wet. Then put the rim of the sock net into the viewing bowl while holding onto the handle. Calmly coax the koi into the opening. After the koi swims inside the sock

**Mini sock net: A Kloubec Exclusive**

The mini sock net is manufactured exclusively for Kloubec Koi Farm by the Matsuda Net Co. in Japan. Mini sock nets are ideal for retailing koi under 12” size and are available at www.kloubeckoifarm.com.

Elastrator bands and pliers have been used by the Kloubec Koi Farm for years to seal koi bags. This type of band has been catching on as a great alternative to conventional rubber bands. You can find them at your local farm store or livestock supplier.
net grasp the open end with your free hand to close the tail of the net. Twist the handle to close the opening of the sock net so the koi cannot escape.

Now you can carefully lift the koi from the viewing bowl while protecting its delicate skin with the water inside of the sock net. Be sure to keep the sock net as straight (horizontally) as possible when lifting to avoid a spinal injury to the koi. Immerse the tail end of the sock net into the water inside of the poly-bag. Then release the koi by simply letting go of the open end of the sock net and gently lifting up on the handle. The koi will glide out of the sock net and into the poly-bag with minimal effort. Finally, add just enough water to the bag to ensure that the koi’s gills and dorsal fin are completely covered with water. Actually, the amount of oxygen used to inflate the bag is more important than an over abundance of water depth.
Next, remove the atmospheric air from inside the bag by collapsing the top of the bag to the water level. Then insert an oxygen hose into the bag and hold the bag tightly around the hose. Inflate and twist the top of the bag tightly closed. Secure the twisted end with an elastic band. The koi is now ready for transport to its new home. Remind your customer to keep the koi bag out of direct sunlight during the trip home so it does not become over heated.

Congratulations, you have just transferred a koi from holding tank to viewing bowl then into a poly-bag. Finally, you can say to yourself, “I did it!”

About the Author

Ellen Kloubec, 
co-owner
Kloubec Koi Farm in Amana, Iowa.

Ellen 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! www.kloubeckoi.com

Ellen can be reached at ellen@kloubeckoi.com or 319/846-2077

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How Can Calcium Montmorillonite Clay Help?

What is the most important part of your Koi pond or Water Garden? Hands down it has to be your water quality.

Water can come from a number of sources. In some cases it comes from well water, but in most cases these days it comes from your local water company. The local water companies treat the water and during this they remove a lot of the minerals and trace elements that our ponds thrive upon. The only way those minerals and trace elements can be replaced in our ponds are with additives. Calcium Bentonite / Montmorillonite Clay is one of the best ways to add those minerals and trace elements back into the pond water.

Calcium Bentonite / Montmorillonite Clay has a number of minerals and trace elements in it that help our fish thrive. Not only does it help our fish thrive, it also helps the beneficial bacteria in our ponds thrive. The beneficial bacteria that live in your filters consume the minerals and trace elements added by Calcium Bentonite / Montmorillonite Clay. Some of those minerals and trace elements are calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium, and iron.

Calcium Bentonite / Montmorillonite Clay also helps the digestive system of your fish. A lot of the top hobbyists in the world add it to their paste foods. It has been said that the clay also helps the coloring of the fish, making the whites and reds stand out.

People have asked if our fish and beneficial bacteria are the only ones that benefit from adding Calcium Bentonite / Montmorillonite Clay to the pond?

No, Calcium Bentonite / Montmorillonite Clay has an extensive surface area which allows it to attract, and then absorb, toxins such as heavy metals, free radicals, and pesticides. It also has minerals and trace elements that help make plants flourish. When re-potting your plants in the early spring, add a few tablespoons of clay to the potting soil along with some type of aquatic fertilizer tab, and you will see a difference in your plants.

Are all Calcium Bentonite/Montmorillonite Clays the same?

No, they come in a number of grades. Some have more silica then others, and some are full of impurities. We suggest doing a few tests on your clay before adding it to the pond. One test is how well does it mix up. Some low-grade clays will clump up. You will not want to use these clays in your pond. You run the chance of it plugging your filtration system. Another test you can do is to mix it in a glass of water. After a minute or two you should not see a lot of particles floating on the surface of the glass. If you do, there is some type of impurities in the clay.

When calcium-based montmorillonite clay is present, it provides essential minerals and trace elements to the fish and...
plants AND detoxifies the water and fish. What takes place is a process of absorption and adsorption.

Rich in trace minerals and absorbable calcium, (contains over 60 essential trace minerals) each tiny, tiny particle of this calcium montmorillonite clay, aka Terrapond remains in an alkaline state retaining its electrically active, negatively charged ion. When introduced to the pond, the toxins, bacteria and pathogens in the water, which carry a positive electrically charged ion, bind to the negatively charged ions in the clay. These toxins are held in a colloidal state (suspended) inside the clay particles and leave through the filtration system.

The clay, when ingested by fish (they enjoy nibbling on the clay), goes through the digestive system binding to the toxins in the fish’s body. These toxins are encapsulated in the clay and removed through their waste elimination process...toxins, clay and all. The added benefit is that the calcium montmorillonite contains highly absorbable minerals that are easily assimilated by fish, humans and all animals, in turn strengthening the immune system, enhancing the production of enzymes, and effectively detoxifying the body.

The minerals in this particular clay also promote beautiful coral and plant growth, visibly displaying the results.

Much has been written and researched about the healthful benefits of calcium montmorillonite clay when ingested by humans and animals.

The Healing Power of Living Clay by Neva Jensen includes a study entitled Trout Researchers Share Info. The director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife services Tunison Research Lab in Hagerman, Idaho spoke about the biggest expense on a fish farm, which is the feed. However their studies proved whenever the fish were fed this cheap clay, they grew bigger even when the feed was reduced.

How Much Calcium Montmorillonite Should I Use?

Premium calcium montmorillonite is a very fine, pure, edible clay and it will stay suspended in your water while doing its work. Many first-time users are often concerned when their water doesn’t clear in a short period of time. Please do not be alarmed. Even if you accidentally apply a dosage that exceeds the recommended amount, you can never harm or overdose your fish with this 100% natural product.

Start with a conservative dose if your pond water is already at or close to an acceptable level of clarity. This clay’s colloidal suspension properties allow it to continue bonding with impurities, carrying them safely into your filter. It also allows more nutrients to get into your fish’s systems. Since the best koi are raised and live in mud ponds, your fish will thank you for their mud bath that improves conformation, coloration, health, and vitality.
In the November/December 2010 issue of Pond Trade Magazine, we wrote an article titled, “Starting a Business in a Down Economy.” Columbia Water Gardens first hit the market in 2007 as an Internet reseller/drop shipper. Since then we have slowly but deliberately grown our retail presence and one of our big secrets is about to be shared here. Before I really dive into this, I want to state the obvious. The pond business is a service business. Think about it. How many of your customers need just a little push in the right direction, or some massive overhaul of a bad design gone worse? How many of them are so knowledgeable that it would frighten a Ph.D.? The bottom line is that from either end of the spectrum, our customers call us because they need help. To that end, customer service must be and cannot deviate from being the benchmark of your success.

When I opened our retail location, I actually solicited house calls after hours. I wanted to be in front of as many of my customers’ ponds as possible and help as many as I had the energy to do so. What’s even more interesting is that I did it for free. One of the fastest lessons I learned is that customers would gladly pay for those visits and the light bulb went off. I realized my time was actually valuable. What’s even more interesting is that my customers led me to realize that there’s actually a market for performing pond maintenance and making service calls. In my market area, there are some of the most amazing and talented pond builders in this industry. Some of them are nothing less than booked solid. It’s not uncommon to have the phone ring and it’s a new pond owner that can’t get a hold of their contractor and they are having problems that appear to have no solution. They know nothing of this thing called the

by Carl Petite
Columbia Water Gardens

Sample Service Form. A copy is left with the customer and one goes in their file in the office. (Reduced to fit)
“nitrogen cycle,” don’t understand what this new pond startup process should look like, and are more or less lost. That’s where we come in.

Last year we began a maintenance route. Today, we have a substantial list of customers that either have used our services or continue to do so on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Here’s why:

A maintenance route keeps your business’s name in front of your customers weekly. You will have a customer that is loyal, attentive, and for the most part, captive. They also build neighborhood interest in the simple fact that there is a water feature at the neighbor’s house further advertising your business. Here’s a few do’s and don’ts.

**Do:**

1. Put your best face forward. The person you choose to be on the maintenance route is a direct reflection of your business. This person should be professional, courteous, and have a very strong attention to detail.
2. Train you customers. Get them involved and interact with them. Teach them as much as you can, train them as best as possible, and empower them to do every part of the job. Trust me, they will try to do what you do a few times and gain a better appreciation for your services, and help you maintain the pond or water feature – and that’s a home run.
3. Be accountable. Maintain your appointment times. Keep records of water testing, give copies to your customers weekly, and keep a copy in your customer file.
4. Take your time while you’re there and do a good job. We have gotten our most loyal customers from other pond professionals that were in and out too fast and the customer lost the value in what they were doing.
Don’t:

1. Don’t assume anything. Communicate with your pond owner and see that you are meeting their expectations. If you happen to go there on a day when they’re not home, follow up with a phone call to answer any questions they might have had.

2. Don’t give freebies. This is a business, and if you get in the habit of giving away too much too often, your customers may take advantage of that and be offended when you charge them. If you must give them a freebie, invoice them for the full price and on the next line of the invoice show the discount.

3. Don’t hide your mistakes. If you break something, fix it. If you have to come back, then be back right away. We picked up a very loyal customer because their pond professional broke the auto fill valve while cleaning the skimmer. The installer didn’t install a ball valve to shut off the water at the skimmer so he just let it run. Needless to say we came in, fixed the auto fill valve, added a shut-off, and have had this client for over a year now.

If you are thinking of adding a maintenance route to your retail store, here are a few ideas to get started.

- Make friends with your local department of real estate. Lots of realtors, lots of homes, lots of connections.
- Solicit your counter customers and have a before and after proof book right there on the front counter.
- Solicit the neighbors. When we do a cleanout, we have a postcard that apologizes for the mess that we mail out the day after we service the pond.

**UP**

Considering the investment you make—and the pride you take—in your clients, why risk their approval by specifying an aerator with inferior technology and less value? To keep their fish at optimum health, there simply are no better blowers than Medo’s LA Series. Here’s why:

1. They last longer, especially in hot, humid climates.
   Medo’s unique linear free piston design has one moving part per piston—one. In properly installed and maintained wastewater systems, Medo piston aerators have an expected service life of 6+ years.

2. They run quieter, supporting the natural design of ponds.
   LA aerators have about as much ambient noise as a light ballast.

   Listened to a diaphragm pump lately? For water gardens, Medo pumps are sweet music to your customers’ ears.

3. It consumes less energy.
   In an era where energy costs continue to rise dramatically, Medo aerators have 50-60% of the line current requirements of diaphragm pumps—just one of the ways Medo helps drive down total costs of system ownership.

**BELLY-UP**

**An ideal idea to discuss with existing accounts**

Aerators leverage filtration capability and increase the overall fish handling capability of ponds and water gardens. They’re an excellent reason to revisit existing clients and open the conversation to how value can be added to their current pond, while protecting their investment in koi. Medo’s extremely reliable design is a signature reason that Medo aerators are number one in Japan.

So whether your clients stock Asagi, Kohaku, or Showa Sanshoku, the next time you’re specifying an aerator for their koi pond, demand championship performance.

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• Referral program. If we have a customer refer us a new customer for the route, we comp them for that month.
• Online marketing via Facebook, Twitter, Tumbler, etc. We Facebook – a lot. We ask our customers to tell their friends out of courtesy and we do get business from that.
• Cleanouts. When we do a cleanout, we get the customer on the route, fast. Whatever it takes, we want to capture that customer.

It’s the little things that make you big. It’s the attention to detail, the mark of excellence and professionalism, and the attentiveness that rewards your business with loyalty leading to growth beyond expectation. Like I started, this is a service business. We take care of people. We are extended stewards of people’s landscapes, their pets, and their lifestyles.

Our service route has been a massive part of our growth. It puts our business in front of our customers, and we embrace it. If you are new to retail, never forget that we are called on to be the experts of our field. Customers expect us to know more than they do, and sometimes that can be a real challenge. Be the face that your customers expect, and exceed their expectations. You’ll be pleasantly surprised, and in some cases if you work hard enough, richly rewarded. Have a great pond season, and make it happen! ☺️

About the Author

Carl Petite, Columbia Water Gardens is family owned and operated by the Petite family - Carl, Michelle, Zack and Ian. Our retail store is located in San Jacinto, Ca., and we have over 14 warehouses that we distribute from nationwide. Carl brings over 20 years of professional management experience in retail sales, and is a hands on hobbyist with his koi pond of over 12,000 gallons with a strong knowledge and expertise in water chemistry and clarity. We have a full service website that is constantly updated with new product and competitive prices.

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A growing number of people are enjoying the rewarding hobby of tending ponds and water gardens to keep in touch with nature and enjoy tranquility and peaceful reflection. However, because these ponds are small eco-systems, they can pose challenges in many ways. Eco-systems depend on balance and if not maintained properly, can become a source of frustration and worry. One of the frequently overlooked rules of balance in an eco-system, regardless of its size, is the need for proper water levels.

Ponds can lose water in numerous ways such as small leaks, wicking from waterfalls, evaporation and small animals drinking from them. While most of us are aware of the need for proper filtration and water quality, we often overlook the importance of a good filling system when considering the health of our ponds and water gardens. People new to pond keeping, and some seasoned keepers alike, will many times employ the basic method for filling; using a garden hose. This simple method is great for those with the time to commit to constantly keeping an eye on their pond or water garden and ignoring the hazards of doing so.

Experts know that filling with a hose can lead to disaster. Douglas Hoover (2010) points this out saying, “The greatest drawback to filling your pond with a garden hose is the frequency of overflows and flooding associated with getting preoccupied with other tasks and forgetting to turn off the hose.” Timing the fill may aid in reducing the possibilities of overflows but requires a knowledge of the rate of flow in the hose as well as the volume of fill water required.

A more accurate method of filling the pond is by using an automatic filling system that can sense the level of the water and refill it without the pond owner having to do anything. Yet the merits of an auto-fill are a much-debated topic. Many state that while auto-fills can be helpful in situations where the owner is away or is unable to haul hoses out, the main argument against them is that they can mask a leak that can mean adding a continuous stream of chlorinated water into the pond that poses the potential for hurting the fish.

First, it should be understood that adding chlorinated water to a pond with fish in it should never be acceptable to the pond owner. While it is true that small amounts of chlorine will not do immediate harm to fish, it takes time for the chlorine to dissipate and, depending on where it is introduced into the pond, it may cause harm to fish without the owner even suspecting it. Therefore, it is important to always use an in-line chlorine filter for water feed lines on city water. Chlorine filters can last up to a year and are relatively inexpensive and easy to install or replace. Therefore the threat of chlorinating the water should not discourage the use of an auto-fill.

Second, it is true that a basic auto-fill can mask a leak. However, many professional electronic systems provide an alarm to notify of a leak and indicate when the unit is filling so that the user can determine how often it is filling.

With these concerns being dispelled, maintaining a constant water level using an auto-fill aids the pond keeper in many ways, from ensuring constant surface area for proper oxygenation to protection of their fish and expensive pumps from low water levels caused by evaporation and leaks. They can also minimize the time spent on maintenance and ease the owner’s mind when on vacations.
Auto-fill devices come in three main forms: mechanical float valve, electromechanical timed valves, and electronic sensing systems. Of the three, float valves have been around for decades and are the most popular because of their low price. Electromechanical systems are inexpensive but generally rely on batteries to operate and can fail when the owner forgets to change the batteries. Electronic systems can range into the thousands of dollars, depending on the type of materials used in manufacturing it or the technology employed within it. Yet they are, by far, more reliable over the long run.

Furthermore, inexpensive, float valves have drawbacks that the electronic units do not have. First, they are a mechanical device and are prone to failure. There are numerous tales of horror told on the Internet and elsewhere of expensive koi and pumps being lost due to the failure of a float valve. Countless inventors have had limited success in redesigning the float valve so that it is more reliable. However, all retain the mechanical properties of their predecessor, just in a different form. It is the mechanical component that makes a float valve susceptible to failure. As with any other mechanical objects, the moving parts can stick or wear over time and cause problems. This is especially true in an environment where they are exposed to algae, oxidation and other contaminants.

Electronic auto-fills on the other hand have no moving parts and are therefore less likely to fail from environmental causes. Unlike float valves, they are susceptible to power losses. However, here is where the difference between the two is less obvious. When power goes out while using a float valve, the float valve will still work whereas the electronic fill will not unless it has a battery backup. This is one of the arguments against electronic auto-fills. In reality the pond is not as susceptible to water loss when power is out. The vast majority of leaks in ponds come from water movement through pump systems, streams or waterfalls. If power goes out, the majority of the leaks in ponds are essentially non-existent during the outage. Therefore, the threat of loss decreases significantly during a power outage.

An additional argument against electronic systems is their cost. The economics of electronic systems can be allusive. For those on a budget, a $600.00 unit can appear to be daunting. However, it is no fun to shell out thousands of dollars to build one’s dream water feature and not have a fill system that is adequate for the project. It is almost like buying a Rolls Royce and finding out that you do not have the right equipment in it.

Watergarden.com (n.d.) outlines the advantages and disadvantages of auto-fill systems within the range of good, bad, ugly and uglier. Focused primarily on float valves, they categorize the potential mechanical flaws associated with float valves as ‘even uglier.’ In order to work correctly, float valves depend on mechanical parts to work. Toilets have used mechanical float valves for more than a century to refill them after they are flushed. The mechanical systems work quite well when the water is clean and free of suspended debris and other contaminants. Still, these valves fail from time to time and need replacement because mechanical parts wear out with repetitive movements.

This is true of any float valve but only a portion of the problem with float valves used in a pond or water garden environment. Generally, water in the average pond is not free of contaminants and float valves must operate continuously with these particles floating freely around the mechanical components. This presents a high risk of the float becoming clogged or corroded and ending in failure.

Another potential problem with floats is that they are typically made of plastics that are porous in nature and can wick water into them when in constant contact with water. Regardless of the cause, floats tend to fail in the open position.
This may in part be due to the assistance of gravity forcing the bulb down over time even though water pressure is unable to overcome the friction in the mechanics when they become clogged or corroded. Or the float bulb becomes filled with enough water to limit its buoyancy. Still, the economics of a float valve may appeal to those willing to cope with these potential problems.

Another consideration when choosing an auto-fill system is where it will be mounted. Float valves come in a variety of forms. Some have large float bulbs attached to pivoting arms similar to a standard toilet float that are not very pleasing to view. These operate in a horizontal plane and need significant area to operate. In recent years, some designs have incorporated a vertical method of operation, which reduces the size of the mechanism considerably. However, regardless of the design, most pond owners do not want to mount a float valve directly in the pond and opt for mounting in a skimmer or an optional valve box affixed to the pond that adds an additional level of difficulty when installing them.

Electronic systems, on the other hand, usually have a small unobtrusive sensor that can be mounted away from the water feed and are more easily hidden from view.

Many professional installers understand the drawbacks to float valves and insist on installing a professional electronic fill system. The price for these systems can range from $300.00 to $3,000. These systems use a small sensor connected to an electronic controller and an irrigation valve. The sensors are small and inconspicuous when installed as before. Controllers generally have provisions for indicating power status, fill in progress and alarm conditions in the form of LEDs or some type of lamp. The power indicator merely shows whether the unit has power applied to it or not. The fill indicator provides visual information of how often the unit is filling which can be useful in systems with limited alarm capabilities.

Systems with alarm capabilities provide a wide array of monitoring options. Alarm conditions may be caused by conditions from a loss of power or sensor connectivity to a low water level condition. What types of alarms are available depends on the type of system and what controller is used.

Another advantage of these systems is their capability to delay the fill cycle due to motion of the water. Without this function, other systems such as float valves can fill erratically due to fluctuations in the pond surface and potentially cause an overflow.

Systems come in a variety of types with varying configurations such as make-up fill, low level cut-off, overfill protect or any combination of these.

Make-up systems sense when the water level is low and refills to a set level. They have no provision to monitor outside of the expected range of water level. If a leak develops that removes more water than the feed to the auto-fill can provide, the system remains on even though the water level in the pond continues to drop. No alarm is triggered since the system ‘believes’ that everything is normal. However, this is a rare occurrence when the proper size system is installed.

Low Level Cutoff systems determine that the unit is unable to keep the water level at normal levels and either turns the system off and provides an alarm condition, or maintains the fill on and goes into an alarm condition. These systems can also shut off pumps and other equipment to protect them from burning out.

As the name suggests, a system with overfill protection senses when the water level has risen higher than normal levels and shuts the system fill off and provides an alarm. Most of these systems incorporate the functions of a makeup system as well.

Of the various types, makeup systems are the least expensive and, as would be expected, provide a minimum level of protection from failures.

Because of the cost of these professional systems, other electronic systems are available that require no controller and provide basic filling at a much lower cost. These systems generally use a sensing component, a standard irrigation valve and a power supply. Although marketed as electronic auto-fill systems, one of the two types uses sensing probes while the other is a float-actuated switch. Of the two types, units that use sensing probes are more similar to their professional counterparts and have no moving parts that can fail.

Once owners understand the importance of a good auto-fill system, they must decide which type of system is best for them. Far too often cost is the single most important factor when deciding which to use. However, cost should be weighed against other factors such as maintenance time, features, warranty, installation requirements and potential for failure.

Cost can be a bit deceiving when not calculated correctly. A $50 float valve may seem the best approach to someone on a budget. However, over time, the benefits of a professional electronic system can outweigh any cost savings of a basic float. In maintenance time alone, an electronic system can save many
hours of cleaning mechanical assemblies or replacing faulty floats. Additionally, the ability to maintain a more accurate level in the pond along with the added protection of an alarm condition in a malfunction can immediately make the extra cost of these systems worthwhile.

Regardless of what system is chosen, the net benefit will be substantial over manually filling the system each time needed. Filling a pond manually by hose dictates that the owner must observe the water level at all times. This can result in fluctuations in level of several inches at times, depending on how attentive the owner is. It has been shown that water level fluctuations in large bodies of water can be dangerous to the balance within the eco-system and affect any life within them (Cott, et. al, 2008).

Therefore it is reasonable to deduce that water level fluctuations are just as dangerous (if not, more) to small eco-systems as an inadequate filtration system and should not be left to chance. The proper selection and use of an auto-fill can aid in the health of the pond, lower maintenance time for the owner and limit potential disasters caused by low water levels. Their use can make the difference between a healthy, enjoyable pond and constant aggravation and repair expense.

References

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About the Author

Hollye Merton, President/CEO, founded Aquility Systems in October 2009 after many years developing the Level Waters™ Pond Filling System. She holds a BS in Information Systems Management and a Masters of Science in Technology Management with the University of Maryland University College and is working on her MBA. Hollye served for 18 years in the U.S. Navy as an electronics technician and has worked as a production manager for a large antenna-manufacturing firm. While there, she directed a small subsidiary company designing and producing positioning systems for Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) and EMC testing for various government contracting, and international customers.

Hollye began building ponds while in elementary school, inspired by her father’s construction of a Japanese landscaped pond built in her backyard while growing up. She constructed ponds for the elementary school garden solariums and received extra credit for her efforts.

Throughout her life, she has made a point of always having a pond wherever she lives and she developed the Level Waters™ system from a need to fill her own ponds. After recognizing a universal need for a product like hers, she set out to engineer a system that was dependable and easily installed by the average pond enthusiast.

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In the first two articles, in a series of three, we explored how the laws of the marketing curve, the current economical impact, and the changing demographics of the core discretionary spending group (ages 35 to 55) has not only transformed the Water Garden Industry into the Water Features Industry, but has also pointed out the importance of marketing goods and services to a diversified customer base over the next 3, 5, and 8 years.

Edward Barlow Jr., President of Creating the Future, Inc., stated, “People and organizations tend to force their past experiences and successes into the future. As market conditions change or cycle this approach generally doesn’t work.” He also stated, “The future is in the hands of those who choose to understand it.”

The laws of the marketing curve have provided the industry with rapid growth over the last twenty years, primarily in water gardens and pondless water features. As the industry continues to evolve, it is the diversification of products and services that will prove to be the single most important contribution to future growth.

The industry now provides a much broader base of opportunities to find new customers in water gardens, water features, fountains and statuary for landscapes, entry-ways, and patios, spillway kits with LED lighting for the outdoor living areas with retaining walls, and outdoor kitchens. And don’t forget the rapidly growing market for diffused aeration and fountains for lakes and pond management, which includes commercial retention ponds, private earthen ponds, and larger lakes.

The opportunities are many, and the future will be a bright one, however, knowing where, when, and how to focus marketing dollars is extremely important as many contractor/installers, distributors, water garden retailers, and lawn & garden nursery centers fine tune their marketing plans and explore new ways to invest their marketing dollars to secure new customers in the future. Networking will play a big part in these plans.
This is why “business” focused articles are so valuable. The most valuable contribution one can make to the industry is to share their “business management and marketing successes” with other business owners in the industry. I encourage you to pick a topic…write it up…and send it in. The Landscape and Pond Industries has benefited from this type of sharing for years, and everyone wins.

The combination of the current Economy and Changing Demographics has certainly impacted our industry. However, moving forward it also holds a lot of opportunity for those who are diversified. Look at it this way: The most successful financial portfolio is one that is diversified. When one segment of the market is slower there are others that are producing faster growth. We are fortunate that our industry provides these same advantages.

Baby Boomers, with the most discretionary dollars and plans to continue working longer, are still putting in ponds, Just-A-Falls, and spillways along with retaining walls, outdoor living spaces that include kitchens, and fireplaces. Market yourself in these geographical areas and/or team up with landscape contractors and provide your expertise in design and installation techniques.

Commercial and industrial sites, housing developments, and individuals with ¼ acre and larger earthen ponds are paying more attention to the “green benefits” of diffused aeration, fountains, and beneficial bacteria, which provide ecologically balanced ponds while reducing the use of chemicals. Locate these bodies of water, contact the associations, market a program, and secure the business opportunities?

Home ownership with Gen Xers will continue to increase over the next 3, 5, and 8 years, and once this group with dual professional careers enters into home ownership, and college debt is paid off, they will be one of the most financially influential groups in history. Team up with realtor associations and know where and when the growth is happening.

If as a lawn and garden retail center you can (1) provide knowledgeable sales staff to assist customers with pond and waterfall designs, (2) have working displays that are kept clean, and (3) signage showing cost break-down of pond and landscaping material, you can be successful. If this just doesn’t work into your business plans, you can still take advantage of the fountains and statuary category. Today there are realistic looking quality fountains and statuary available with suggestedretails between 200 and 300 dollars, and without the disadvantages of costly heavy weight stone or weather sensitive light weight resins. You still become a destination for traffic flow.

Another way of securing new customers is by partnering up with other business owners. As a lawn and garden retail center, if you don’t have a landscape division that installs water features, team up with a contractor who does. The contractor does the installation, you get an agreed upon finder’s fee, and the contractor who doesn’t want call backs refers the customer back to your garden center’s water feature department for treatments, plants, and accessories.

Here are a few other ideas and web sites to check out for finding new customers.

Personal Web Site - Contractors and installers tell me that 60 to 70% of their business comes from their web site. Key search words that include all the services you provide like landscaping, outdoor living, water gardens, Just-A-Falls, spillways, and fountains are critical. Make sure your city and state are included to insure maximum hits from your market area.

Once on the site, contact information should be easy to locate. You would be amazed at how many sites I have been on where I can’t tell what city or state the business is in. The photo library is a must and it is more important to show examples of a variety of projects and services than it is to show 6 different angles of the same feature. Be sure to list testimonials, awards, and your memberships with professional groups.

Become the Local Expert – Benefit by helping to meet the needs of others. Become a local resource for T.V. and radio programs, garden writers, newspapers, local magazines, county extension services, or a speaker at local clubs.

Write and Distribute a Press Release – write a press release about your business, or get the local T.V station or news-
paper to cover a business or outdoor living story about your business, new product introduction, pond tour events, charitable event, history or years in business, recent awards.

**Use Social Media** – Write a Blog, Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, etc. According to a recent poll 72% of respondents checked out a company’s reputation on chat boards before buying. 74% based their buying decisions, at least partially, on what they read. 81% thought that blogs, online rating systems, and discussion boards gave them valuable feedback.

**Seek Partnership Businesses** – who also attract the kind of customer you want and would be interested in your products and services. Make a list of potential partners, schedule a meeting, and create a joint marketing program. A common one is to exchange Coupons or Gift Certificates at each other’s business. Another one is to utilize customer mailing and/or email lists sharing promotions at each place of business. You don’t have to exchange customer lists, just use both customer lists to distribute the shared promotions.
**Get Involved with the Local Home Show** – Get a booth, set up a water feature, take along a flat screen T.V. and roll pictures of your projects, and pass out a lot of cards.

**Partner with Charitable Causes** – Work with non-profits to raise money by donating a percentage of all sales to their cause. Send an endorsed mailing with an enclosed Gift Certificate and/or have an after-hours Gala at your store where you will donate X% of every sale that night.

**Hand out Gift Certificates** – at the event you attend.

Check out these web sites for more ideas...or just Google finding new customers.

Inc.com – then type in search – new customers
Microsoftbusinesshub.com – click on solutions – reach more customers
Resourcenation.com/blog/using-social-media-to-find-new-customers-for-your-business
Businessxcredittank.com/bootstrap/52-creative-ideas-for-finding-new-customers

Wishing you the best of success in this wonderful business.

*Rick Smith*

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**About the Author**

Rick Smith serves as Director of Sales with EasyPro Pond Products and has 30 years of organizational leadership and sales and marketing experience in the Lawn & Garden Nursery and Water Features Industries. Prior to coming to EasyPro, Rick served as Sales and Marketing Manager of the retail division for J. Mollema & Son (a large mid-west lawn & garden distributor supplying independent garden centers nurseries, growers, and landscapers). He also spent 12 years with The Scotts Company working with independent business owners as well as regional and national chains.

For the past 17 years, water gardening has been one of Rick’s passions. While enjoying his own ponds and fish, Rick has had a focus on contributing to the enjoyment of other pond owners, as well as the success of business owners, by developing customized business plans, sales support material, and numerous power point training seminars.

Rick has appeared in various business trade publications both as an interviewee and as a contributing author. In addition, Rick has conducted seminars at trade shows, county extension services and Fredrick Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park as well as retail staff training and public seminars on lawn & garden, wild birds, and water gardening topics.

Www.easypropondproducts.com

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Reuest info at www.pondtrademag.com/infocard/ ▼ # 1460
The International Waterlily and Water Garden Society (IWGS) announces *Nymphaea* ‘Scarlet Flame’ as the 2012 Collector’s Aquatic Plant of the Year. This tropical water lily boasts uniquely-shaped, large red flowers containing over 100 petals and petaloid stamens. ‘Scarlet Flame’ was introduced by Florida Aquatic Nurseries and received 1st Place in the Tropical Day-Blooming category of the IWGS 2011 New Water Lily Competition.

“‘Scarlet Flame’ is truly unique in its appearance and stands in a league of its own,” says Brandon McLane of Florida Aquatic Nurseries. “This free-flowering tropical water lily produces up to 3 blooms at a time and is accented by bright green pads with red undersides. We’re quite pleased with the results.”

The International Waterlily and Water Garden Society is proud to feature *Nymphaea* ‘Scarlet Flame’ as this year’s Collector’s Aquatic Plant of the Year. This is an exclusive arrangement which means the IWGS will be the only source for limited supplies of N. ‘Scarlet Flame’ in 2012, until it becomes available in the retail market no earlier than spring of 2013.

The Collector’s Aquatic Plant of the Year program provides a limited opportunity to purchase new and/or rare aquatic plants prior to widespread distribution while also serving as a fundraiser for the Society.

To purchase *Nymphaea* ‘Scarlet Flame’ or to learn more about the International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society, visit www.iwgs.org or call 540-337-4507.

The International Waterlily & Water Garden Society (IWGS) is a non-profit organization of multinational membership dedicated to the furtherance of all aspects of water gardens and their associated plants. The IWGS supports and promotes education, research, and conservation in these areas and serves as the official registrar of Nymphaeaceae and Nelumbonaceae.
Upcoming Events

May 1 – 3
National Hardware Show
Las Vegas Convention Center
9 shows within a show including the
Lawn, Garden & Outdoor Living Show
www.nationalhardwareshow.com

June 13
California Grown Show and The
Nursery Mart
Long Beach, California
www.cangc.org

August 17–19
2012 Nursery/Landscape Expo
Houston, Texas
www.nurserylandscapeexpo.org

August 21–23
Independent Garden Center Show
Chicago, CA
www.igchshow.com
Also see Pondemonium event listing.

August 23–26
Pondemonium 2012
Chicago, Illinois
Will dovetail with the Independent Garden
Center Show in Chicago
www.pondemonium.com
www.aquascapeinc.com

October 2–5
Watersmart Innovations 2012
Las Vegas, Nevada
www.watersmartinnovations.com

November 3–5
2012 INFO TANZA
Orlando, Florida
8th Annual Trade Show and Educational
Seminars hosted by IPPCA. In conjunc-
tion with the Irrigation Show.
www.ippca.com/InfoTanza-home

November 4–5
Irrigation Show 2012
Orlando, Florida
www.irrigation.org

November 6–8
Pool|Spa|Patio Expo
New Orleans, Louisiana
www.poolsapatio.com

February 7–8, 2013
Water Garden Expo 2013
Shawnee, Oklahoma
Watch for information on our website
www.pondliner.com

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Why would anybody go to Oklahoma in the dead of winter? The below freezing winds are harsh, the roads can be icy, and you have a pretty good chance of encountering snow. Yet, every year, members of the pond trade make the trek to Shawnee, OK, to attend the Water Garden Expo, put on by Pondliner, a division of Unit Liner. The Expo is of a breed of event that wholesale distributors all across the country have embraced over the last decade or two, to host their clients and prospects to a meet-n-greet. Factory representatives from the brands they distribute attend, to show off their wares, roll out new products, and write orders.

Events range from single day demos, to all out multi-day convention style blow outs, with multiple tracks of speakers, and a formal trade show floor. Arguably the biggest of these is the Water Garden Expo.

The success of this kind of event cannot be overstated. It really works. It is, then, one of various industry get together formats that are vying for industry attention. Other formats include events held by industry associations such as the IPPCA and NAPP, those by individual manufacturers like Aquascape and Savio and local get-togethers (or Meetups) of pond companies in local regions. At one time there was another format, the privately staged trade show and expo, Pondapalooza, which sadly, no longer exists.

In February 2012, at the Pondliner Water Garden Expo, 25 manufacturers, their most ever, showed up to dazzle 187 attendees at the Heart of Oklahoma Expo Center in downtown Shawnee. Visitors stalked the booths, and enjoyed the 21 seminars, on three separate tracks - Business Practices, Construction & Design and General Water Garden Knowledge.

There is clearly vitality in this business, and the energy around the show was infectious, for those looking to find new ways to grow their business. New products and upgraded versions of reliable standards were shining.

John Wattington, head of their wholesale division, noted that there was a different feeling, a different atmosphere around this show, like folks were expecting better things this year. Excitement and optimism were clearly in the air.

Pulling off an event of this magnitude is no small feat. Trade associations rely largely on the dedicated efforts of their members, where Pondliner throws their substantial staff and resources to stage the event. The cost is high, but the payoff in sales written and relationships built make it all worthwhile for the host, exhibitors and attendees alike.

Clearly there is no one event format that fills all needs but, the number of get-togethers available today bode well for our mutual future in this crazy innovative industry – the pond trade.

**Mark your calendars** – the 2013 Pondliner Water Garden Expo is set for February 7–8, 2013. Contractors and pond product dealers are offered free attendance. For the full story, visit www.pondliner.com.

See a list of industry events at www.pondtrademag.com.

Contact info
Pondliner
7901 N. Kickapoo
Shawnee, OK 74804-9107
(405) 275-4600
john@pondliner.com
Now Available – Victoria ‘Adventure’

For what is most likely the first commercial offering, Victoria ‘Adventure,’ the seldom seen fourth variety of Victoria lilies will be available to water gardeners this year. ‘Adventure’ is the result of reversing the cross used to make the popular Victoria ‘Longwood Hybrid’ and for years was thought to be impossible.

The pads reach 3 – 8’ and are bronzy-green with 2 – 3” dark red rims. The larger flowers are creamy white the first night and medium to light pink the second night.

Orders can be placed now, and with a $25.00 deposit your plant will be reserved for shipment in Spring/Summer 2012.

Quantities are limited and vary from year to year depending on the growing season, so orders for 2012 will be closed as soon as the available plants are sold.

Limited quantities of this unique Victoria will be available in the 2012 season from

www.victorialilyspecialties.com

DR® Power Equipment Introduces Versa-Trailer

The new all-steel construction-utility trailer features the world’s first boom-lift that pivots to lift up to 440 pounds on either side of the trailer. The boom-lift can also be used to raise and lower the galvanized steel bed, which resists dents and rust. The bed itself can be removed (no tools required), quickly converting the trailer to a stake bed for harvesting trees or hauling long loads.

The trailer’s tandem wheels, which pivot on a single axle, allow it to “walk” over uneven ground, so owners can take it anywhere their ATV, UTV, or compact tractor will go. And unlike most poly or wooden ATV trailers and dump carts, the Versa-Trailer was designed with a rearward pivot point, which achieves a 35 degree dump angle for clean unloading every time.

DR Versa-Trailer starts at a $2,199 list price, but beginning in 2012, introductory offers make this innovative dump trailer even more affordable. The trailer can be purchased at drpower.com/versa-trailer

PRODUCT PHOTOS AND DEMONSTRATIONS ARE AVAILABLE. DR® Power Equipment sells products factory-direct and through a network of over 500 dealers; a free catalog can be ordered at 802-877-1200, or obtained online at www.drpower.com. For more information on DR® POWER EQUIPMENT, please contact Marcus Certa: mcerta@chp.com.

NetPave Porous Pavers

Pondliner Wholesale introduces: “NetPave Porous Pavers” from Firestone.

NetPave® 25 is the easy-to-install paving system for grass. NetPave® 25 porous pavers are intended to be used on top of existing grass surfaces to provide a level of protection to the grass surface. It needs no substructure or excavation - it is simply laid onto the grass surface and is ready to be used to improve vehicle traction and prevent rutting. NetPave 25 is ideal for running/bike trails, short-term parking, residential driveways, and roof gardens.

NetPave® 50 porous pavers reduce storm water runoff and increase infiltration - with the strength and durability comparable to impervious pavements like concrete and asphalt. NetPave 50 is ideal for permanent or overspill parking, drives / paths / bike routes, and fire and service access roads.

NetPave® 50 pavers are made from 100% recycled polyethylene and is connected by lugs and slots. These unique flexible elements can be laid on undulating surfaces and gradients. NetPave® 50 can be filled with soil/grass; the cellular structure and open base enables unrestricted root growth. Alternatively it can be filled with gravel and the cellular structure will retain the stone and prevent loss or displacement.

Pondliner Wholesale is a division of Unit Liner Company. At Pondliner “We ship everything but the water.” To learn more visit www.pondliner.com or call (866) 219-3561.

New Axiom Pond Skimmer by EasyPro

EasyPro introduces the new Axiom skimmer in four sizes — 5000, 7000, 9000 and 11000 gallons per hour. Features include:

- Pro-Series strength and ease of installation
- Pre-installed plumbing connections
- Larger pump chambers
- Vertical filter brushes
- Stainless steel hardware
- Front to back design
- Adjustable overflow allows finished pond level to be adjusted
- One-piece, aluminum framed debris net makes cleaning quick and easy
- Made in the USA

To request a catalog or for more information on EasyPro products call 800-448-3873 or visit easypropondproducts.com.
Aquascape, Inc. Moves Back to Corporate Headquarters

Aquascape, Inc., the innovative leader of water features in North America and inventor of the low-maintenance ecosystem pond has moved office operations back into its corporate headquarters, dubbed “Aqualand.” A partial roof collapse 12 months ago forced the company to temporarily re-locate both its office and warehouse space.

In February 2011, the roof covering Aquascape’s parking lot collapsed on a Sunday afternoon following a major snowstorm that blanketed the Chicago area with 20.6 inches of snow in less than 24 hours. “Thankfully no one was in or near the building at the time of the collapse,” said Greg Wittstock, CEO and founder of Aquascape. “Our team worked quickly to re-locate both our office and warehouse operations and we were able to minimize the disruption of business to our customers. After a year of working from a temporary location, we’re extremely grateful to be back at Aqualand.”

Aquascape was granted office occupancy on January 30th. Warehouse operations are expected to move back to Aqualand in the near future. Construction continues on the company’s atrium at Aqualand and the Aquascape Water Gardening Store is slated to open for business on March 20th. The store carries everything necessary to install and maintain a beautiful water feature. Aquatic plants and live fish are available for purchase in addition to pond supplies and water gardening books.

For more information about Aquascape products and supplies, log onto www.aquascapesinc.com. For store hours and information, visit www.aquascapedesigns.com or call 630-659-2057.

2nd US Patent for RockToRubber

Mark Jessen received his second US Patent - US8028848 and second UK Patent GB2472314 on his Masonry Anchor known as RockToRubber. This anchor allows firm adhesion of rocks and masonry to pond liner. The anchors stick to nonporous surfaces, and with the use of a small amount of concrete mortar, adds stability, safety and greater versatility to pond designs. Each anchor is approximately 6” x 12” and now comes with or without pressure sensitive adhesive. This revolutionary pond product is ideal for repairs, cosmetic applications and construction of rubber-lined ponds.

Made entirely of fish-safe components, RockToRubber anchors can be used to construct entire ponds as seen at www.thefishtender.com, secure the top ring of rock, hide a skimmer lid or provide a stable rock to safely enter and exit the pond.

Mark is owner of The Fish Tender and a Co-founder of the Austin Pond Society. For more information and photos, visit www.rocktorubber.com or call Mark at 512-947-1391.

Aquility Systems Introduces New Line of Illuminated Waterfall Weirs

Aquility Systems, Inc., a Gainesville-based designer and manufacturer of innovative pond environment controls, today introduced its new Mystic Falls™ line of illuminated, colorful waterfall weirs for ponds or water gardens.

The new Mystic Falls™ systems are available in four standard sizes: 8”, 12” 16” and 20” (24” and 36” available by special order) with a choice of White, Red, Green, Blue and Amber colors. Lighting arrays use cool, energy-efficient LED’s that make waterfalls sparkle with light. Both the optically clear acrylic refractor plate and LED arrays are removable for easy cleaning. If no lighting is desired, weirs are also available without LED arrays (STW model prefix).

Illuminated cascades are also available for fountains (ILF models) upon request and provide “a touch of elegance to any fountain.” Fountain Cascades have a sleek profile for use in clean water applications.

“The new Mystic Falls™ system lists at a MSRP starting at $149.95. For more information, contact the company at 352-332-1549 or via www.aquilitysystems.com.

Innovative Pond Skimmer Created By The Pond Digger

Let me introduce you to The Helix™ Pond Skimmer, the next generation in Pond Skimmers! 35” Tall x 19” Wide x 18” Long. This compact footprint is easy to disguise in the landscape. The Helix can handle a wide range of flow rates from 1500 gph to 8000 gph. Designed for use with submersible or external pump installations, this new pre-filter provides great versatility in pump selection.

The Helix is a fish friendly pre-filter designed for optimal surface skimming. The 12” wide mouth of the skimmer opening leading to the area around the circular weir is a “no trap zone” for your pond fish. The Helix boasts a 15” circular, self-leveling, floating weir.

This compact circular weir competes with the largest skimmers on the market for optimum surface tension. A full 15” of surface tension within a specific diameter and an 8” round by 8” tall durable Debris Basket give The Helix a vacuum-like effect that is capable of capturing a ton of wind blown debris and is super easy to clean.

The Helix is equipped with Stainless Steel Hardware meaning you’ll have no worries about hardware rusting if you need to salt your pond.

Manufactured in the USA with a heavy-duty rotational molded HDPE material - This pond skimmer is SUPER RUGGED, overflow compatible with flat spots on the round body for plumbing an efficient overflow up to 2” in diameter and is automatic water fill valve friendly. The Helix is roomy enough for the installation of a float valve without your typical issues of malfunction.

The unique design is perfect for AIR LIFT skimming applications. Easy to install - Easy to maintain – Easy to Sell - We believe The Helix Pond Skimmer will set a new standard for skimming ponds. This is what people are saying about our new pond skimmer.

Eric Tripplett, The Pond Digger
eric@theponddigger.com
www.theponddigger.com
During the month of February the IPPCA (International Professional Pond Companies Association) added 3 industry professionals to its esteemed Board of Advisors panel. Rick Bartel, Andy Schoenenberger, and Randy Stewart have all agreed to provide guidance to the IPPCA with their vast industry experience and knowledge.

Rick Bartel has been a successful pond contractor, has written the popular “The R.I.S.E. Method” book on water feature installations, and travels the world as instructor for the Savio Water Feature Institute.

Andy Schoenenberger has over 15 years experience in pond installation. Andy is currently with Franklin Electric and runs their Outdoor Living Product and Marketing Group. He has written articles for numerous industry publications.

Randy Stewart has been with Unit Liner of OKC for over 16 years and is currently the E-Commerce Marketing Manager and Product Manager for their Water Garden Division, Pondliner.com Wholesale.

To learn more about the IPPCA and its goal of promoting continued growth in the Pond Industry please call 770-592-9790 or visit www.ippca.com.

MedFinn is Here

We finally have medicated feed available. We first brought MinnFinn to treat external infections and now we have MedFinn to help with gram-negative internal bacterial infections. MedFinn is based on the science behind the treatment of bacterial infections. The dose of antibiotic in the feed, the amount of feed used and the duration fed are all very specific.

As with any antibiotic, if you do not use it long enough or at too low a dose you can create resistance to the antibiotic in the bacteria you are trying to eliminate. With the misuse and broad use of oxytetracycline over the years, there are many bacteria that are resistant to it thus we lose a tool in our toolbox. In the development of MedFinn it is not the medication that is different, it is the care we have put into the way it is used. We ensure that the quantity in the food is at the correct level and then we help you determine the amount you need to feed to ensure a proper treatment.

We will supply a spreadsheet to distributors and retailers, which will be used to calculate the amount of medicated feed needed. All you need from your customer is the length of all the fish in the pond to be treated. The sheet will calculate an estimated weight and the amount of food needed for the 10-day treatment.

Call for a Fact Sheet, price list and any questions.
Paul Curtis, AquaSolver LLC/AquaFinn 760-518-8170 or paultrout@aquasolver.com.
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The International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society is proud to announce its selection for the 2012 Aquatic Plants of the Year. Each year the IWGS announces the selection of an exceptional aquatic plant in each of the categories of Hardy Water Lily, Tropical Water Lily and Marginal. The Society’s goal is to enhance each pond owner’s enjoyment of water gardening with the choice of outstanding, obtainable performers.

Hardy Water Lily Selection: *Nymphaea ‘Mangkala Ubol’*

Created by Nopchai Chansilpa of Thailand in 1997, this gorgeous, free-blooming water lily with large, very double yellow-to-peach flowers won the Best New Water Lily Competition in 2004, but has only recently become widely distributed.

To quote Richard Sacher, noted hybridizer and pond retailer with American Aquatic Gardens, New Orleans, LA: “Mangkala Ubol is one of the best hardy waterlilies ever, especially in the southern part of the United States. Mangkala Ubol is just about the only hardy water lily that will bloom non-stop all through our torrid summers.”

“Mangkala Ubol also blooms on and off through the winter, whenever our temperatures are mild enough,” explains Sacher. “This year, it had flowers almost every week and is the earliest hardy lily to bloom in the spring and the last to stop blooming in the fall … if it stops at all. It loses some of its pink coloring at the base of the petals in summer…but retains that contrast all winter, spring and fall. It is easy to propagate, compact in size, and here in New Orleans, the most reliable blooming hardy water lily that I know of, producing more flowers in a year than any other hardy variety I have ever grown. It performs almost like a tropical!”
Tropical Water Lily Selection:  
*Nymphaea* ‘Foxfire’

*Nymphaea* ‘Foxfire’ was hybridized in 2003 by Craig Luster of Luster Aquatic Nurseries and was named Best New Tropical and Best Overall New Water Lily in the 2004 IWGS New Water Lily Competition.

According to Mike Swize of Nelson Water Gardens, Katie, TX, “The flower consists of an inner ring of narrow yellow petals, edged with pink and surrounded by an outer ring of wider blue petals. The foliage is a very striking mottled green and brown; the leaf can reach up to 30” with a spread of 15’ on specimen grown plants if given sufficient soil, fertilizer, and space.”

“Blossoms on a well grown plant can range from 8” to 11” in diameter and are held from 12” to 24” above the water surface,” Swize continues. “Foxfire is a large plant, but it can be successfully grown in smaller areas by restricting pot size and trimming back older leaves. Foxfire is not a finicky plant to grow, being very robust and very cold tolerant. There is not an easier plant to grow that will command as much attention and it has always ranked as one of my favorite tropica s since its introduction.”

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Marginal Plant selection:  
*Orontium aquaticum* 'Big Red'

*Orontium aquaticum* has been around ever since the species evolved, but this particular selection was introduced several years ago by Randy Heffner of Aquascapes Unlimited in Pipersville, PA. *Orontium aquaticum* 'Big Red' is much larger, more robust, and faster growing than the species. ‘Big Red’ also sports red stems and spadix, with large, bluish green leaves. It may be propagated by division, and also comes about 85% true from seed, making it a reasonably stable strain. This superior *Orontium* should be the selection of choice for anyone desiring the bright, cheerful, early spring blooms of Golden Club. Hardy to USDA zone 5, it enjoys sun or partial shade.

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Criteria for Aquatic Plants of the Year

Many factors are considered in selecting each year’s aquatic plants: tendency to bloom prolifically, reliability, beauty, consistency, broad appeal, availability, and vigor. The selection is made more diffi- cult by the fact that soil, climate, fertility, and other growing conditions can make a variety perform differently for growers or for home gardeners, and also in different areas of the country, or even the world. Some plants even exhibit different habits such as deeper colors, or wider opening flowers under varying circumstances. Water lily specialists have long noted this phenomenon. For this reason, the panel always contains members from widely varying geographic areas.
Designed Right

Little Giant Outdoor Living products leave your customers free to enjoy the tranquility of their backyard oasis.

Features:
- Highest quality and safety standards
- Innovative product design
- Updated product offering
- Optimal performance

Please visit our new website, www/lg-outdoor.com, for more information and look for the new, comprehensive catalog coming soon.

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