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Features

9 OASE Shows Market Leadership at World’s Largest Home Show in Cologne, Germany
Mike Garcia
Mike visits the world’s biggest home show – Spoga/Gafa, in Germany. OASA wins “Best Innovation in New Products” award for “FiltoMatic CWS.” Learn more about this world-class show.

12 COVER STORY- The Grid Veggie Filter
Plant Filters work like mad in warm summer months. This one works year around.
Jamie Beyer
Learn the best plants to use in this new plant filter design to get year round results even in a koi pond.

18 Consider Your Strengths When Building Your Pond Business
Curt Nuenighoff
How you organize your pond department, publicize your business and educate your customers is as important as what you sell. Have a successful pond department by following the five steps explained in this article.

22 How to Build a Modern Koi Pond – UK Style
Malcolm Green
Follow step-by-step design and construction of this modern above ground koi pond. It features simple design and construction methods utilizing contemporary gravity filtration, and is heated.

28 Get Off Your Butt: 16 Ways to Get Motivated When You’re in a Slump
Leo Babauta
When in a slump start with one goal – yes I said one goal. Life does ebb and flow, so make that goal, get support, read and learn and think about the benefits not the difficulties. Point number 16 – Squash negative thoughts; replace them with positive ones!

32 How to Buy and Inventory Aquatic Plants
Paula Biles
Refine your plant sales systems this spring. Paula tells all in her article covering topics such as: Know Your Aquatics, Customer Preferences, Selecting a Supplier, Finding the Perfect Aquatic Plant, and Best Values for the Money. PLUS a must read list of common preventable mistakes so you won’t have to learn the hard way!
36 **Selling Kujaku**  
*What to Look for in Kujaku*  
Tom Graham  
What are the eight easy features of the Kajaku that make them fun and easy to sell? Not quite sure what a Kujaku is? Read Joel Burkard’s definition here as well.

46 **Recession Power: How Great Companies Rise to the Top, Even in Down Times**  
*Denise Corcoran*  
Are you tired of hearing all the "doom and gloom" forecasts regarding our current economy? Recession IS strictly a matter of perception. Here are the top 7 reasons why great companies thrive during a recession and how you can do the same.

50 **Women in the Water Feature Industry**  
*Heather Woolf*  
As a woman, clients wonder if I am capable of handling the physical challenges necessary to install water features. Once I begin to work they realize I am equal to the task. Women may actually offer some advantages that men may not. Hard work and attention to detail is what generates positive client recommendations.

### Columns

7 **Editor’s Perspective**  
Tom Graham

41 **When Working in Your Customer’s Garden Beware of Plants That Bite**  
*Lee Van Wychen*

43 **Pondapalooza 2008**  
*And Mark Your Calendars for 2009*  
*Roseanne Conrad*

54 **IPPCA InfoTanza 2008**  
*Freddie Combas*

62 **Finishing Up – We are the garden pond industry, are we not?**  
*Tom Graham*

### Departments

57 **Press Releases**  
60 **Professional Associations**  
60 **Upcoming Events**  
61 **Advertisers’ Index**
What does the future hold for your business? What can you do, and more importantly, what will you do to guarantee your business will survive and grow in 2009, given the dramatic financial and political changes we have seen over the past few months? We read about consumers cutting spending, and companies large and small closing their doors. What are you going to do now to make sure you are counted among the survivors, the strong ones who grew in tough times and came out on top in the end?

Everyone has heard that to do nothing is to fall backward but where does one start? This issue we focus helping you get your plan going for 2009 so you can have the best year you can.

If you are feeling a bit blue, you might start by reading “Get Off Your Butt: 16 Ways to Get Motivated When You're in a Slump” by Leo Babauta. Once you have your head back on straight, jump to “Recession Power: How Great Companies Rise to the Top, Even in Down Times” by Denise Corcoran. This will get you thinking about things you can do right away and in the future.

To round out our focus on planning for success, read “Consider Your Strengths When Building Your Pond Business” by Curt Nuenighoff to bring it all back home to our industry and read how women are making it work in our article “Women in the Water Feature Industry” by Heather Woolf.

This issue we also continue to focus on the fundamentals by diving into a new design for a plant or veggie filter, how to buy and inventory aquatic plants, an English koi pond construction project, our look at selling Kujaku, and a look at what OASE did at the largest home show in the world.

How’s that for a bundle of good reading? Enjoy, and please let me know your thoughts on these stories and what you would like to read more about in future issues.
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I was recently invited by Europe’s biggest pond products manufacturer, OASE, to attend training on their new products and to be their guest at the world’s biggest home show – the Spoga/GAFA (International Trade Fair for Sport, Camping and Garden Lifestyle/International Garden Trade Fair). I left from Los Angeles on a Thursday afternoon and arrived in Cologne, Germany on Friday. There’s a nine-hour time difference between Los Angeles and Germany, however, any tiredness I felt soon vanished, as the adrenaline started to kick in from being in Europe. This was my first trip to Germany and everyone told me to visit the Cologne Cathedral, which I did the day after I got there.

Since the hotel was so close to the airport, I took a taxi and arrived in about 20 minutes. Upon checking in, I stopped by the hotel restaurant and saw America’s OASE Rep Frayne McAtee and the Canadian Rep Rob Mackay. We sat to discuss what to expect from the GAFA show. We also discussed the changing pond climate in the United States. We decided to explore the area, as there were many fine restaurants and German breweries along the Rhine River. One is hard pressed to not gasp for breath as you first catch sight of the amazing stature of the Cathedral. It took some 600 years to complete and is rich with history and treasures.

We had dinner on the riverfront and continued our discussion of European pond building vs. US pond building and there are definitely BIG differences. One BIG difference is that the European pond builder puts energy conservation at the top of the priority list. It seems that the whole European culture looks at energy conservation as a way of life. If you’ve ever watched a movie filmed in Europe, such as the current James Bond movie, you will notice the overall size of European cars. They are built to conserve fuel and energy. They take this same approach to pond building.

The next day, I met up with the Editor of Water Garden News, Brian Hutchins and our friend Steve, a distributor out of Kansas...
City to go out to dinner. We again ended up on the Rhine riverfront and enjoyed a great German dinner. We got back to the hotel a little after midnight, in preparation for the start of the big GAFA show, which was set to begin the following day.

Sunday morning saw a North American force of about 15 distributors, contractors and OASE reps board the prearranged bus to take us to the famed GAFA show. Did I mention that GAFA is the world's largest home show? In a good economy, it boasts over 100,000 attendees and will take you days to cover. It has booths related to water gardening, general gardening, patio furnishings, horse riding apparel, play equipment, soils and fertilizers, plant nurseries and way more!

Upon arriving, I headed straight for the water garden area. This segment of the show was about as big as the whole Landscape Industry Show which is hosted by the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA) each February. Water gardening is really big in Europe! The average booth was about 10' x 10'. The OASE booth was right at the entry and was an incredible (approx) 150' x 150'. I had never seen such a large booth. In fact, OASE had the largest booth in the water gardening area.

One very interesting difference between American Shows I have seen and the GAFA is that the large GAFA booths had table, chairs and sofas and some even hosted full bar for current and potential clients! These bars included not only drinks, but also desserts, the BEST German chocolate you've ever tasted and entertainment. It's easy to see why the GAFA is only every other year, as much effort is made to make this a world-class event.

The GAFA has a “Best Innovation in New Products” booth. And the winner (judged by an independent panel) was OASE's new “FiltoMatic CWS” water garden filter. I feel this is going to play an important role in the American pond world, once it becomes available in the US, which is sometime later this year. This innovation winner actually cleans itself ... Automatically! Congratulations to OASE and their team of engineers!

OASE sponsors a huge company buffet dinner and literally took over the restaurant! I estimate there were over 500 guests. I truly enjoyed meeting reps from all over the world including Bahrain, China, Estonia, and over 30 other countries! After the food, dancing, German beer and camaraderie, we returned to the hotel.

The next day I attended a presentation on OASE's FiltoMatic CWS Box and several other new products for 2009. The FiltoMatic CWS not only cleans your pond, it actually cleans itself out, which would be like having a vacuum cleaner automatically
Green, are you making a difference?

The US market is currently being driven by “GREEN” products, that is to say, products which use as little energy as possible, and which leave as small of a carbon blueprint as possible.

A pump may have a small energy draw, but if it only lasts one to two years, of what benefit is this to our landfills? Of what benefit is it if a pump last eight years, but it uses tons of electricity to make it work? As a professional pond builder, I want what is best for my client and the world ecology. I believe all of us have to look past “the cheapest pump” if we are to make difference. Education is crucial. If you are a pond installer, when is the last time you researched who makes the longest lasting, most energy efficient pumps? There is no excuse in today’s world. Simply “Google” efficient pumps or ‘longest lasting pond pumps’ and do your research!

The American pond phenomenon has happened in the last 15 years. Europeans have been building ponds for centuries and the modern pond industry has been around for about 60 years. What can we learn from the voice of experience? Bigger is not always better.

In America, we may love our Hummer’s, but this is not the way to go if the market place is now being driven by energy conservation. So why would we build an energy guzzling water feature, when the technology now exists to reduce electrical needs? That would be like telling a client you are going to replace all their new LED energy efficient lighting with the old incandescent energy hungry light bulbs! Makes no mistake! The current and future pond market is, and will continue to be driven by demand for energy efficiency. Will you rise to the occasion? The existence of our planet depends on each and every one of us. YOU CAN make a difference. Your impact as a professional pond builder is in direct proportion to how much you can reduce the carbon footprint of your projects. It’s not just about aesthetics anymore; it’s about our environment! ☹️

About the Author

Mike Garcia founder of Enviroscape began his career in the horticultural field more than 25 years ago. After earning his college degree in Ornamental Horticulture, he earned his C-27 Landscape Contractors License, as well as his D-49 arborist Tree Service Contractors License. Under his leadership, Enviroscape has won numerous landscape and water feature awards at the local, state, national and international levels.

www.enviroponds.com
The Grid Veggie Filter

Plant Filters work like mad in warm summer months. This one works year around.

There are seven 1' X 2' Grids in this grouping. This grouping is over 10 years old. It not only serves as an extremely efficient filter but it is beautiful.
In this article I am introducing to PondBiz readers a unique technique for growing aquatic plants that enables them to be used as excellent phyto or veggie pond filters. At one time I was going to patent this technique, but I am now more focused on sharing the information with clients and other water gardeners.

Using plants as filters for water gardens and aquatic ecosystems is a very important concept, and is commonly used. There are always “new” techniques being developed for growing the plants in ways that improve their filtering capability.

Some enterprising water gardener installers and businesses are using bog filters planted with hardy plants. I really like these and can easily see an application for them in most water gardens. (check out Nelson’s Water Gardens web site for ideas on bog filters, www.nelsonwatergardens.com).

There are many types of tropical plants that float with their roots dangling in the water and serve as excellent plant filters. However, overwintering large numbers of these plants to ensure having the same filtering capability in the Spring that we had from the Fall before, when the tropical floating plants were at their peak, is difficult in temperate climates. So, many of us are using hardy plants that are rooted in some kind of substrate in an attempt to have a head start on some type of veggie filter in the Spring.

Most plants that are rooted in a substrate can extract the majority of their nutrients directly from that substrate and not from the water column, while the types of plants that float with their roots dangling in the water are dependent on getting most of their nutrients from the water itself. These floating types of plants are the best forms of “veggie” filters, because the huge mass of roots are not only extracting large amounts of nutrients from the water, but are also providing a huge surface area for a biofilm to exist. This biofilm is what I have termed “A Pond’s Patina,” or APP. In APP there are all kinds of bacteria, invertebrates and good algae. This biofilm exists on nearly everything the water is in contact with.

What is needed for those of us in more temperate areas is a type of plant that is hardy and can survive with its roots dangling in the water.

Yellow flag iris can be a vigorous grower. These roots on a year old Grid show how effective the Grid filter can be.
Roots have a type of surface that is difficult to simulate with any other type of material that we may want to use. So, it is unique, providing a different niche with more surface area, than the type of surface that rocks or liner provides. This means that more types and species of good critters can exist in an ecosystem. These bacteria and invertebrates provide a critical link in the web of life, or ecosystem.

There are water gardens that have a large biologad (overpopulated with fish and excess nutrients) that appears to be functioning well without an added biological filter. The fish seem to be doing great and the water is “gin” clear. In most situations, where these conditions exist, there is usually a huge proliferation of floating tropical aquatic plants. Most of us have seen this, but when the temperatures fall and the floating plants die, the conditions for the fish deteriorate quickly. Water quality starts to deteriorate, planktonic algae can proliferate and the whole ecosystem can suffer.

What is needed for those of us in more temperate areas is a type of plant that is hardy and can survive with its roots dangling in the water. All of the nutrients that the plant needs would have to come from the water and not from a “soil” or substrate. Ideally, the plant would stand upright and grow easily in these conditions. A water gardener would then have the ideal plant filter functioning 12 months a year. Yes, I did say 12 months – even during periods of heavy ice, this type of plant should be able to extract nutrients. Albeit, not as many, but it will still be filtering. I know that this type of plant can filter year round, but I am also certain that it transports oxygen to its roots beneath the ice, thereby adding O₂ to the water column. This is a time of the year when more oxygen is always welcome.

It was by accident that I discovered such a plant. It is Iris pseudacorus, or yellow flag iris. I had a 14” diameter pot of it growing in topsoil and it had overgrown the pot. It literally kept growing outside the pot with its roots dangling in the water column. The yellow flag that was growing outside the pot was as vigorous as the plant that was growing in the soil inside the pot. It was easily 36” in diameter and only 14” of it was inside the pot! This plant is banned in a few states because it is so vigorous, but for those regions where it is not considered invasive it can be used to our advantage.
I have found that the yellow flag iris can be “planted” on a grid or grating that has openings of from 1” to 1.5/8”. Plastic bread trays or plastic dog kennel grating works very well. I like to cut the size of the Grid to 1’ by 2’. The iris rhizome should have its roots pulled through the grid so they dangle below it. The rhizome is initially “tied” to the top of the grid with a black plastic tie. This provides the initial support for it to grow. I like to “plant” one rhizome per every 16 square inches on the grid. You could plant it heavier to jump start to attain a fully mature grid faster. Once the iris rhizomes grow across the grid it then becomes self-supporting with a huge mass of roots dangling below.

The Grid needs to have stability, so a framework is built to support it. This can be done with 2” Schedule 40 PVC pipe that is made into a table like framework. The joints will need to be glued together with PVC cement. The height of the framework can be adjusted for each pond’s depth so that the rhizomes are at least 4” below the surface of the water. Yellow flag iris can grow with its crown in 2’ of water, or even deeper, but does best with 4 to 8” of water over the crown. The important aspect is to provide as much space under the grid as possible so that the roots can dangle. If you plant it any shallower then fluctuating water levels can leave the rhizome out of the water. Any kind of desiccation of the rhizome can kill the plant or at least inhibit its growth.

It is very important to provide stability for the framework by including stabilizing legs that are perpendicular to the framework and on the bottom. When the Iris grows on this grid the plant will become top heavy, and it does not take much wind to blow it over. You can add weight, such as a clay fired brick, to the bottom of the framework thereby giving it added stability.

The Grid Veggie Filter can also be used within a koi pond if the roots of the iris are protected from the foraging behavior of koi. This can be done by closing in all four sides of the Grid with additional grating. This allows free movement of nutrient rich water and will prevent fish from foraging on the roots.

Put it Anywhere

The Grid can be placed anywhere in the water garden, but the best locations are where there is some water continually flowing around the roots. This can be any place in a well circulated water garden. I believe the filter is most effective when placed in the faster water flow of a stream or biofalls.

Grids can be supported on the ledge of a biofalls without the PVC framework. They can grow very fast in these situations because of the upwelling of nutrient rich water continually bathing the roots. I recommend that the guts of the biofalls be taken out. Otherwise, the roots of the iris will intertwine in the bags of lava rock and the mats. This can be a nightmare to untangle. Most of the time these biofalls are not maintained the way they need to be anyway and the Grid Veggie Filter provides many times the filtration that the lava rock and mats did. Rock can be placed around the edge of the Grid to give it stability.

A good ratio of planted yellow flag iris Grids in a water garden or fish pond would be a 12” x 24” Grid per 2,000-gal of water.

Maintenance of the Grid Veggie Filter is Simple

Occasionally, parts of the plant will die for some reason and these sections will need to be removed. In the Fall, after the first couple of hard freezes, the iris on the Grid can be trimmed. I like to trim the iris fan to about 6 to 8” out of the water with hedge shears. I first take the Grid out of the water to do this so that all of the trimmings fall onto the ground and not into the water. If this is not done the top will bend over and decompose in the water over the winter. When the fans are cut back, you are removing a huge amount of nutrients from the ecosystem that were taken up by the plants. The plants remove the nutrients from the water and you remove the excess plant material.

Yellow flag iris is very hardy and can survive freezing in water even when it is simply floating. When it is anchored or “planted” to the Grid it becomes very robust even after a single growing season. I have attempted to grow many other kinds of hardy plants on The Grid but not with the success that I have with yellow flag iris.

The beauty of this filter is that it does not require a water pump for it to function. It can fit into any kind of water garden, even a container garden. It is a beautiful plant and more attractive than a black box that needs to hidden. Maintenance is relatively easy enough that anyone can do. It works 12 months a year, even during the winter, under the ice. Finally, I can honestly say that it is a very inexpensive filter that every water garden should have.

About the Author

The very popular subject of adding water features to a garden is one that Jamie Beyer brings a lot of knowledge and enthusiasm to. Jamie is a Lifetime Master Gardener and is founder and immediate Past President of the Central Iowa Water Garden Association. Water gardening has been a passion of Jamie’s for over 45 years and, currently, he has three 10,000 gallon ponds and one 27,000 pond which contains many kinds of water plants and fish. He combines this experience with his Master’s Degree in Fish and Wildlife Biology to become uniquely qualified to be one of the Midwest’s foremost experts on the subject. His broad background of fisheries, dynamics of water, wildlife ecology, and horticulture gives him impressive credentials. Jamie frequently speaks and writes on all aspects of water features and water gardening to gardeners in the Midwest. In addition, he also has a consulting/installation business, called Midwest Waterscapes, which he works as a water garden, fountain and pond consultant/installer to people that want extra help. Jamie has considerable experience installing ponds, diagnosing water garden problems, teaching classes and helping do-it-yourselfers, do it right. Since the late 80’s, he has been involved with the design and installation of over 500 water gardens and features.

Jamie and co-author Veronica Fowler, wrote the Ortho Book “All About Garden Pools and Fountains.” Over a half million copies of the book has been sold in the six years since its publication.

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Consider Your Strengths When Building Your Pond Business
by Curt Nuenighoff
TetraPond Director

How you organize your pond department, publicize your business and educate your customers is as important as what you sell. If you are not creative in promoting your ideas, products and services, your competitors will be and your customers will follow them. This is the perfect time to re-evaluate what you are doing to market your pond department and examine how you can make changes that will ultimately affect your bottom line.

Follow these five steps for a successful pond department:

1. Create a marketing plan

In order to promote your product and services effectively you must clearly outline your goals. This outline should include measurable results such as your sales goals for the year or how many new customers would you like to see in your store each month.

Once you’ve outlined your measurable goals, it is important to conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of your business. Start by listing the strengths and weaknesses of your store. A couple of examples of your strengths would be a great location or perhaps you offer expert advice through an e-newsletter. Weaknesses are areas that could be improved upon that you control. For example, you may have no one on your staff that understands the pond hobby or your pond department is too small to make a big impact. Take some time to be honest with yourself on your strengths and weaknesses.

Next, where are there opportunities for improvement? Is there more space to devote to the pond department, or is there money in the budget for a part-time pond expert (often a good pond customer can be a resource).

Threats are considered conditions which could do damage to your store’s performance. Outside influences that affect your business are often out of your control but you should be aware of them. An example of a threat is another store offering everything at a discount or even be the economic conditions at that point in time.
creating billboards from boxes, or other strong visuals. Some may provide step-by-step brochures and guides that support your recommendations and help make their visions come to life.

- Whenever possible, arrange products upright to make a strong visual presence on the shelves. Consider creating end-cap displays using large buckets, boxes or product for high impact.
- Use life-size photography and posters of fish, aquatic plants and flowers, waterfalls and other features as a source of inspiration for shoppers.
- Consider where you place products. Keep consumables, such as fish food and water treatments, at eye level.
- Create a live display as room allows. It can be as elaborate as a full pond with fish and foliage or as simple as a water-spitting statue. The sight and sound of moving water draws customers in and helps them visualize and plan features for their home.
- Educate yourself on the newest products available, from food to equipment. Talk to your sales staff or regular customers to determine what products are cutting edge and set the trend in pondkeeping. Investigate the options, and then stock your shelves.

4. Promotions, publicity and advertising

Promotions

A well thought out and maintained pond department is the first step in creating more business for your store. Next, you must create a desire in your customers to take their hobby to the next level. The best way to do this is to promote the department in and out of your store.

- Work with your staff to explain the importance of customer service. Educate them on the pond business by supplying them with articles for reading and websites for training purposes. Your staff is your front line and your customers’ first impression. Expert advice will ensure repeat visits and build loyal customers. Don’t lose site of that!

2. Create strategies to capitalize on your marketing plan

After you’ve established the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of your store, it is time to get creative! Make a list of strategies that can complement your strengths, minimize your weaknesses and exploit your opportunities – while keeping mind of the threats.

For example, maybe there is an opportunity to partner with a stone or paver company in your town. You could supply your customer with the pond products and the other business can help with the landscaping and you both offer a discount to the customer for using the businesses in conjunction with one another. That is a great strategy to make the most of an opportunity!

As you plan out your pond department and your promotional ideas, keep your marketing plan in mind. Every strategy should improve your weaknesses, highlight your strengths, and create opportunities.

3. Plan your pond department

Your customers look to you to be their expert in pondkeeping. In order to attract new customers and keep the regulars coming back, you must create a pond department that is visually pleasing to your customer. Determine what space will be your “pond department” and post signs that clearly mark the space. Here are some ways you can dress up your department and enhance the shopping experience for your patrons:

- Visually build your pond department with existing well-branded point-of-purchase materials and product packaging for an impressive, cohesive look. Remember to ask your manufacturers for assistance – most welcome the opportunity to provide professional collateral or recommendations on
• Hold events in the pond department that customers can attend. Try a ‘how-to’ workshop on topics such as: laying out a pond, pond fish selection, cleaning and maintaining your pond, and more! Encourage customers to sign up and provide valuable information such as their home and email addresses for future promotions, mailings and seminars. Provide a vehicle for proud customers to share their accomplishments and experiences through your website, in-store bulletin boards or local water garden “tours.”

• Cross-sell wherever possible. If you have containers in your store that are perfect for small ponds, but they are stocked in a different area than the pond department, consider placing a brochure or ‘take-one’ explaining how to create a container pond on this shelf. Spark an interest for first-time pondkeepers. Many may not realize how easy it is to create a backyard oasis.

• Consider a referral program for your customers. Develop a program that is easy for your pondkeepers. Let them know that for each person they refer to your store for a pond product, they will receive a chance to win a great product or service from you.

Publicity

Publicity is one of the most under-utilized tools for most business owners. Mainly because it isn’t their specialty and it’s hard to know where to start. Start thinking in terms of your customers needs. If you are holding a ‘how-to’ workshop in your store, send a press release with the details and specifics on the event (check with your local Chamber of Commerce or business group for help on writing a press release). Give the local media a reason to come to one of your workshops. Showing children how to build a pond or container pond is a great human interest story – don’t forget to toot your own horn!

Advertising

When determining where and how often to advertise, you should consider how you’ve obtained your customers in the past. Have many come in through word-of-mouth referrals? Or, did they see you in a local newspaper, on a billboard or hear a radio spot? Be sure to start asking new customers how they found you. Keep track of their responses and then make a decision on advertising. If you do decide to place an ad, be sure to discuss design and placement with the media outlet. Request a prominent location and consider placing the ad several times for a better impact. For television and radio, be sure it looks and sounds professional, upholding the image you’ve worked so hard to obtain.

Another no-cost opportunity to advertise your business is through online social networking. Build name recognition by participating in discussion groups or make comments in blogs; include your store name and web site address if you have one.

5. Customer education

As a retailer, you are aware of your responsibility to promote your products verbally to your customers. However, if your sales staff is one or two people, that may become a challenge. It may become increasingly hard to tell every customer about the pond products you stock as well as hear every problem they are having with their pond. You must remember to use your pond department to your advantage whenever possible.

• Offer to test customers’ pond water as a free service when they bring in a sample. It’s a beneficial-value added service that helps build a relationship with the customer while creating a sense of expertise for you. Plus, it provides retailers with the opportunity to provide a solution if the water needs a remedy.

• Have a clearly marked “Education Center” within your pond department and offer how-to books and inspirational magazines or guides that continually pique their interest.

• Offer a monthly or quarterly one-page newsletter that gives tips on anything from maintaining healthy, happy fish to choosing the right plants for a balanced ecosystem. You can also offer this via email. Check with your manufacturer as they may have an e-newsletter you can send to your customers.

• Consider implementing directional signage in and out of the store. Start by placing a banner or lawn sign near the entrance to your store. Then, place a banner outside of the store, in the parking lot or near the entrance. Some manufacturers can provide banners to you as a part of their packaged program. Lastly, place signs in the store (above display height for easy visibility) directing customers to your pond department.

This winter, take some time to create a marketing plan for your business. Determine your goals by conducting a SWOT analysis. Then, organize your pond department to highlight your strengths and minimize your weaknesses. Be sure to publicize, promote and advertise as often as possible. And lastly, add value by giving customers educational materials to increase the enjoyment of their hobby. A well-educated and informed customer is one that will remain loyal for many years to come.

About the Author

Curt Nuenighoff, TetraPond, serves as the pond products manager and is responsible for product development, business strategy, merchandising and marketing in North America. Nuenighoff earned an MBA from the University of New Haven and a BS from the University of Connecticut in Marketing.

TetraPond is an international leader in water gardening products, with its US headquarters in Blacksburg, VA. TetraPond offers a complete line of products for pond enthusiast, including pumps, liners, filters, UV clarifiers, water treatments, books and fish food.

For more information call: 1-800-526-0650, or visit: www.tetrapond.com or email: Curt.Nuenighoff@tetra.net
How to Build a Modern Koi Pond - UK Style

Editoris Note:
We all know there are 1,001 ways to build a garden pond. Here Malcolm Green walks us through the process of planning and constructing an above ground pond designed specifically for show quality koi that he built recently at his retail facility in the United Kingdom.

by Malcolm Green
Koi Water Garden, Ltd., United Kingdom

Here we discuss koi pond construction in some detail. The pond featured is an above ground pond utilizing modern gravity filtration, and is heated. It features simple design and construction methods and was required as a show pond for high grade koi but was also designed to show as much plumbing as possible, so that we could answer as many of the inevitable questions relating to the peculiarities of a modern koi pond, its construction techniques and maintenance issues.

...it can be very difficult to choose the ideal design both in terms of what is really desirable and what will really work.

Before we dig the first spadeful of earth, it is vital with any koi pond to have a design formulated and written down and on which the construction will be based. Clearly, with so many design possibilities, and with limited experience of koi pond construction, it can be very difficult to choose the ideal design both in terms of what is really desirable and what will really work well.

In our initial planning of this pond, the important criteria was to best utilize a small area of available space previously used to house 400-gal stock ponds for baby koi adjacent to our main stock ponds. The objectives were:

• To construct a show pond, which would show off koi to their best in both one year old and two year old sizes

• Be easy to maintain

• Incorporate oversized filtration because of the stocking densities envisaged

• Incorporate heating for temperature control

• Incorporate an Ozone system for ultimate water quality

The final design resulted in a pond approximately 13’ long x 6’ wide and 3’ 6” deep which would stand 3’ out of ground and which we calculated to be around 1,700-gal.

The ground on which this pond was constructed slopes at an angle of around 10°, but this had been previously leveled as small stock tanks had occupied the area until recently. First we dug out the area to be occupied by the new pond to a depth of around 6” below the pre-existing level.

Then we added a material called MOT type 1 in order to provide a stable, level and well compacted base on which the concrete base would be laid. Type 1 is used in road construction and is a loose fill aggregate that when machine compacted provides a very firm and stable sub base for a wide variety of construction projects.
The pictures show the prepared area, 1 with the bottom drain located on a small pad of concrete, and subsequently leveled and glued in place to 4” pressure pipe, 2 which will feed the filter system.

With the bottom drainpipe work in place, the sub base firmly compacted, concrete was mixed and prepared and placed around the bottom drain and the pipe work to prevent any movement when the concrete base was being placed.

Once our bottom drain pipe work was well secured, we left the supporting concrete to partially cure for 24 hrs before we then shuttered the area to be laid to concrete using stout wooden boards and pegs. The base for this size of pond was designed for 6’ of reinforced concrete, so 1.5 cu meters of ready mixed concrete was ordered. The mix we used was Gen 3 with plastic fibers already added. The Gen grading system denotes the strength of the concrete and the plastic fibers replace steel mesh reinforcing. Steel is more complex and cumbersome to lay and will rust in concrete unless it is specially protected, especially when used for pond bases. Plastic fiber reinforcement is cheaper, more flexible, provides a much more consistent form of reinforcement, prevents the concrete from cracking (a common problem with steel reinforcement) and is very, very strong.

Using Ready mix, it took two people 30 min. to place and level the base. The concrete was then floated using a steel float to provide a smoother finish. After 4 to 5 hours, the base was floated again to remove fine tramlines and indentations to leave a smooth and level base, which would be ready for final finishing. In this pond, because we floated the base to a very smooth finish, no render would be required on the base, and therefore the concrete itself was brought right up to the top of the bottom drain lip. 3

The main critical area of strength required in a koi pond is the base, which must be able to support the full weight of water, and must remain intact even in unstable ground conditions.

The base was allowed to cure for 48hrs before construction of the walls commenced. As this pond was designed to be only 3’ 6” deep, and to hold around 1,700-gal of water, the walls were constructed of 100mm dense concrete blocks on edge. The choice of this size of block may come as a surprise because we so often see ponds constructed using 9” hollow blocks backfilled with concrete and reinforced with steel rods. For very large and deep ponds this is excellent practice, but here we are dealing with a much smaller entity. Many people tend to get a little carried away and build ponds which would happily survive a small nuclear explosion and use materials which are inappropriate for the amount of water intended to be contained. As it is difficult to calculate the stresses involved with water pressure, this is understandable, but can be very costly!

The main critical area of strength required in a koi pond is the base, which must be able to support the full weight of water, and must remain intact even in unstable ground conditions. The weight of water in our pond would be just less than eight tons when completed, and the water pressure at the base will be less than 3 lbs per square inch - not exactly startling. In addition there will be several simple reinforcing techniques used during the construction, which will provide ample rigidity and strength to this type of construction – but read on!

Please note that the pond return pipes were built in to the walls during construction, and a small overflow was also incorporated in the far wall (just visible in picture). 4
The outer facing wall when built is 'tied' to the inner wall using steel wall ties built in as construction progresses.

Next, we coated the block walls with a special render mix of sand and cement in the proportions two soft sand to one cement with \( \frac{1}{2} \) kg of plastic reinforcing fibers added to each full mix. This makes the render very, very strong, completely waterproof and resistant to cracking. It is acceptable to use 1 sharp sand, 1 soft sand, 1 part cement, and this will be easier to apply, but more porous when dry. The render is applied in one coat – no scratch coat and topcoat – just one coat, which is then floated using a steel float. It is easy to see the strength of the render from the very grey color; this goes almost white when dry.

Note the benched corners in the pond to help avoid the build up of dirt and dead spots in the pond flow.

Please also note the deep-water return. When building pipe work into the walls for pond returns, and so forth, the very strong render will seal against PVC pipe work very well, and there is no need to contemplate anything more exotic to prevent leakages.
The render was allowed to cure fully over the next week before we applied the finish. Here we have used Aquacote, a two part epoxy paint, in green to give our pond a very hard wearing, smooth and glossy finish which looks like fiberglass when applied – but with none of the disadvantages (cost and risk of toxicity). The Aquacote is applied by roller once mixed, with corners and awkward areas finished using a brush. Two coats are required. The painted finish cures fully within 24 hrs and can then be filled with water (and fish!).

Having completed the inside of our pond, we now constructed the outer facing wall and capped this above the brickwork with a limestone capping. This would later be sealed to ensure no lime could be washed into the pond. Remember when choosing brickwork, that many bricks are very porous – typically the machine made ones are worse and are therefore not as hard wearing as we might like, especially when continually exposed to water splashes. Many of the hand made bricks are stronger, because they are less porous and also look much better aesthetically than machine made bricks. There is the usual disadvantage with hand made bricks – cost!
The filter was then positioned and fitted into place. In this case we used a Nexus 200, but the principle is the same whichever filter you choose.

On the outlet side of the filter, be sure to use an appropriately sized ball or slide valve to separate the filter from the pond on the return side. Also fit single union connectors to the pump so that this can be removed for ease of maintenance and in combination with the ball valve fitted here, will ensure that there are no floods when the pump or UV are removed!

**It is always a good idea to try to be neat and tidy with all the plumbing.**

Note that here the pump, in this case an Oase Aquamax 8000, is positioned on the floor and is tucked away close to the side of the filter so that it is less likely to be stepped on or damaged during access to the rest of the filter plumbing.

The inlet from the bottom drain is connected to the input side of the filter and it is important to use a slide valve or ball valve between the pond and filter in order to separate the two for cleaning, maintenance, but most importantly to be able to purge the bottom drain pipe, where dirt will settle out over time. It is always a good idea to try to be neat and tidy with all the plumbing. Here the two drains from the filter have been plumbed together into one manifold and then piped away to waste. This saves pipe work, as well as keeping things neat.

For the plumbing in this pond we used PVC Class E (similar to PVC Schedule 80 in the US) pressure piping throughout. It is very strong, and whilst by no means the only option, is to be recommended. Pressure pipe now costs little more than ordinary solvent weld piping and most pumps, UV's and other pond fittings such as ball and slide valves are made to accept pressure pipe. In the picture, the vertical pipe on the right of the picture leads into the UV from the main filter pump, just out of view here.

The water is pumped through the UV, exits the UV on the far left of the picture and is then pumped through a stainless steel heat exchanger. We will be heating this pond using oil as a fuel. Water then exits at the bottom right of the heat exchanger and splits into two branches. One leads vertically down and then back to the far side of the pond. The shorter branch feeds through the ball valve to the pond return close to the filter.

Note that a ball valve is always required on the shorter branch when using two or more pond returns in order to balance the water flow between the two returns. If this were not fitted, most of the water would exit from the shorter branch.
In this installation we have fitted a stainless steel UV. There are a number of good UVs on the market today, but the Cloverleaf stainless steel version that we have used here, we have had good success with in the past.

Note that, once again, single union connectors have been used between pipe work and the UV itself. This enables easy removal of the unit for bulb replacement and maintenance.

The electrics for the pond were then installed. Here we used an IP rated five way fused switch box to handle the various circuits required from one mains supply. This enables individual control over every element of the installation in safety. The mains supply was connected via an approved RCCB (residual current circuit breaker) unit.

The air pump required for the filter was mounted as high as possible and above the water level, close to the filter. In this position, should there be a mains power failure, there is no chance of water siphoning back up the piping into the air pump, which would irreparably damage the pump. This model, from the Secoh range is weather proof and very quiet, so needs no external protection from the elements.

And finally, the completed pond, filled with water (and koi) and happily working as the design intended.

The costs to construct this pond, including pipe work, electrics, filter, heating components and all construction materials were in the order of £3000 – so definitely not cheap. This figure does not include labor. Please note that the larger the pond, generally the cheaper the cost per gallon.

If you decide to build a concrete pond yourself, supplying your own labor, allow between £1.20 to £1.75 per gallon depending on your design, size and construction materials. £1

Editors Note – gallons are UK Gal not US Gal. 1 UK gal equals approx. 1.2 US gal. In November 2008, the currency exchange for 1 British Pound was equal to 1½ US Dollars.

About the Author

Malcolm Green has been in the koi hobby for over 20 years and has spent 28 years involved with construction materials testing and water quality monitoring businesses in the UK and USA. He started Koi Water Garden Ltd in 1996 and has been visiting Japan from the early 90s to select koi initially for his private collection and then to meet the needs of the business.

www.koicarp.org.uk
Get Off Your Butt:  
16 Ways to Get Motivated When You’re in a Slump

by Leo Babauta  
http://zenhabits.net

Every Thursday is Happiness Day on Zen Habits.

Even the most motivated of us – you, me, Tony Robbins – can feel unmotivated at times. In fact, sometimes we get into such a slump that even thinking about making positive changes seems too difficult.

But it’s not hopeless: with some small steps, baby ones in fact; you can get started down the road to positive change.

Yes, I know; it seems impossible at times. You don’t feel like doing anything. I’ve been there, and in fact I still feel that way from time to time. You’re not alone. But I’ve learned a few ways to break out of a slump, and we’ll take a look at those today.

1. One Goal. Whenever I’ve been in a slump, I’ve discovered that it’s often because I have too much going on in my life. I’m trying to do too much. And it saps my energy and motivation. It’s probably the most common mistake that people make: they try to take on too much, try to accomplish too many goals at once. You cannot maintain energy and focus (the two most important things in accomplishing a goal) if you are trying to do two or more goals at once. It’s not possible — I’ve tried it many times. You have to choose one goal, for now, and focus on it completely. I know, that’s hard. Still, I speak from experience. You can always do your other goals when you’ve accomplished your One Goal.

2. Find inspiration. Inspiration, for me, comes from others who have achieved what I want to achieve, or who are currently doing it. I read other blogs, books, and magazines. I Google my goal and read success stories. Zen Habits is just one place for inspiration, not only from me but also from many readers who have achieved amazing things.

3. Get excited. This sounds obvious, but most people don’t think about it much: if you want to break out of a slump, get yourself excited about a goal. But how can you do that when you don’t feel motivated? Well, it starts with inspiration from others (see above), but you have to take that excitement and build on it. For me, I’ve learned that by talking to my wife about it, and to others, and reading as much about it as possible, and visualizing what it would be like to be successful (seeing the benefits of the goal in my head), I get excited about a goal. Once I’ve done that, it’s just a matter of carrying that energy forward and keeping it going.

4. Build anticipation. This will sound hard, and many people will skip this tip. But it really works. It helped me quit smoking after many failed attempts. If you find inspiration and want to do a goal, don’t start right away. Many of us will get excited and want
to start today. That’s a mistake. Set a date in the future – a week or two, or even a month – and make that your Start Date. Mark it on the calendar. Get excited about that date. Make it the most important date in your life. In the meantime, start writing out a plan. And do some of the steps below. Because by delaying your start, you are building anticipation, and increasing your focus and energy for your goal.

5. Post your goal. Print out your goal in big words. Make your goal just a few words long, like a mantra (“Exercise 15 mins. Daily”), and post it up on your wall or refrigerator. Post it at home and work. Put it on your computer desktop. You want to have big reminders about your goal, to keep your focus and keep your excitement going. A picture of your goal (like a model with sexy abs, for example) also helps.

6. Commit publicly. None of us likes to look bad in front of others. We will go the extra mile to do something we’ve said publicly. For example, when I wanted to run my first marathon, I started writing a column about it in my local daily newspaper. The entire island of Guam (pop. 160K) knew about my goal. I couldn’t back down, and even though my motivation came and went, I stuck with it and completed it. Now, you don’t have to commit to your goal in your daily newspaper, but you can do it with friends and family and co-workers, and you can do it on your blog if you have one. And hold yourself accountable – don’t just commit once, but commit to giving progress updates to everyone every week or so.

7. Think about it daily. If you think about your goal every day, it is much more likely to become true. To this end, posting the goal on your wall or computer desktop (as mentioned above) helps a lot. Sending yourself daily reminders also helps. And if you can commit to doing one small thing to further your goal (even just 5 minutes) every single day, your goal will almost certainly come true.

8. Get support. It’s hard to accomplish something alone. When I decided to run my marathon, I had the help of friends and family, and I had a great running community on Guam who encouraged me at 5K races and did long runs with me. When I decided to quit smoking, I joined an online forum and that helped tremendously. And of course, my wife Eva helped every step of the way. I couldn’t have done these goals without her, or without the others who supported me. Find your support network, either in the real world or online, or both.

9. Realize that there’s an ebb and flow. Motivation is not a constant thing that is always there for you. It comes and goes, and comes and goes again, like the tide. But realize that while it may go away, it doesn’t do so permanently. It will come back. Just stick it out and wait for that motivation to come back. In the meantime, read about your goal (see below), ask for help (see below), and do some of the other things listed here until your motivation comes back.

10. Stick with it. Whatever you do, don’t give up. Even if you aren’t feeling any motivation today, or this week, don’t give up. Again, that motivation will come back. Think of your goal as a long journey, and your slump is just a little bump in the road. You can’t give up with every little bump. Stay with it for the long term, ride out the ebbs and surf on the flows, and you’ll get there.

11. Start small. Really small. If you are having a hard time getting started, it may be because you’re thinking too big. If you want to exercise, for example, you may be thinking that you have to do these intense workouts 5 days a week. No – instead, do small, tiny, baby steps. Just do 2 minutes of exercise. I know, that sounds wimpy. But it works. Commit to 2 minutes of exercise for one week. You may want to do more, but just stick to 2 minutes. It’s so easy, you can’t fail. Do it at the same time, every day. Just some crunches, 2 pushups, and some jogging in place. Once you’ve done 2 minutes a day for a week, increase it to 5, and stick with that for
a week. In a month, you’ll be doing 15 to 20. Want to wake up early? Don’t think about waking at 5 a.m. Instead, think about waking 10 minutes earlier for a week. That’s all. Once you’ve done that, wake 10 minutes earlier than that. Baby steps.

12. Build on small successes. Again, if you start small for a week, you’re going to be successful. You can’t fail if you start with something ridiculously easy. Who can’t exercise for 2 minutes? (If that’s you, I apologize.) And you’ll feel successful, and good about yourself. Take that successful feeling and build on it, with another baby step. Add 2 to 3 minutes to your exercise routine, for example. With each step (and each step should last about a week), you will feel even more successful. Make each step really, really small, and you won’t fail. After a couple of months, your tiny steps will add up to a lot of progress and a lot of success.

13. Read about it daily. When I lose motivation, I just read a book or blog about my goal. It inspires me and reinvigorates me. For some reason, reading helps motivate and focus you on whatever you’re reading about. So read about your goal every day, if you can, especially when you’re not feeling motivated.

14. Call for help when your motivation ebbs. Having trouble? Ask for help. Email me. Join an online forum. Get a partner to join you. Call your mom. It doesn’t matter who, just tell them your problems, and talking about it will help. Ask them for advice. Ask them to help you overcome your slump. It works.

15. Think about the benefits, not the difficulties. One common problem is that we think about how hard something is. Exercise sounds so hard! Just thinking about it makes you tired. But instead of thinking about how hard something is, think about what you will get out of it. For example, instead of thinking about how tiring exercise can be, focus on how good you’ll feel when you’re done, and how you’ll be healthier and slimmer over the long run. The benefits of something will help energize you.

16. Squash negative thoughts; replace them with positive ones. Along those lines, it’s important to start monitoring your thoughts. Recognize negative self-talk, which is really what’s causing your slump. Just spend a few days becoming aware of every negative thought. Then, after a few days, try squashing those negative thoughts like a bug, and then replacing them with a corresponding positive thought. Squash, “This is too hard!” and replace it with, “I can do this! If that wimp Leo can do it, so can I!” It sounds corny, but it works. Really.
What do you look for when buying koi food?
THE INGREDIENTS!

Emperor’s Choice contains the finest available ingredients that promote healthy koi.

Minhaden White Fish Meal
The primary ingredient in Emperor’s Choice is white fish meal, specifically Minhaden. Some feed companies use ordinary fish meal, but most use the better quality white fish meal. The very best white fish meal is made from Minhaden. Why? Besides being an excellent source of protein, it has very low ash content. It costs a bit more, but it is worth it.

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Ask your dealer for Emperor’s Choice. For a dealer near you call (858) 748-5370
Dealer inquiries welcome.
When deciding what, where, when, and how to buy the aquatic plants you sell each season there are many options. They largely depend upon the tastes of your customers, the capabilities of your operation, as well as how soon the plants will sell. For example, if you have the time and staff to pot aquatic for sale later in the season, the plants you purchase will be different than if you require a finished product ready for sale by the following weekend.

There are four categories of aquatic plants -- submerged (formerly called oxygenators), marginals (bog plants), floaters, and water lilies.

Know Your Aquatics

There are three rules of selling aquatics: 1) be knowledgeable about aquatic plants, 2) be knowledgeable about aquatic plants, and 3) be knowledgeable about aquatic plants. Your expertise will help you decide what to order, how to maintain the plants while in stock, how to create suitable displays and signage, and how to help customers. Sales staff must also know about aquatics since they will be the ones getting questions and providing suggestions for what to buy. The bottom line is that if you and your staff know about aquatics, you will be able to sell them.

There are four categories of aquatic plants -- submerged (formerly called oxygenators), marginals (bog plants), floaters, and water lilies. Most water garden retailers carry at least a few of each to provide everything required for complete pondscaping and healthy pond balance. The ratio of hardy vs. tropical varieties you carry will change with your climatic zone.

Learning about aquatic plants is not difficult. Growers and suppliers will gladly explain the best growing conditions and the different varieties. They are usually well informed on what grows well in your zones or which plants are the dependable classics and which are new. It is in their best interest for you succeed and sell truckloads of plant material. A visit to their growing facility may be a valuable road trip for your aquatic plant staff. They'll see different varieties side by side, learn about proper growing conditions, and get ideas about varieties to stock.
Besides countless web sites, there are several good books that should be part of your garden center’s reference section and required reading for your staff. You or an employee should drop in on a local water garden club meeting or pond tour. You will see what types of aquatic plants are common, how they grow, and their best uses around the pond.

**The ideal supplier is knowledgeable, has consistent quality plant material, offers a wide variety, and has good prices.**

**Learn Your Customers’ Preferences**

It’s essential to keep good records of everything you stock (variety and size) as well as what sells, what bites the dust while in inventory, and what customers return. In addition, maintain a list for customer requests. Make certain all your sales staff uses the list. You can utilize it to institute and promote a special order program to obtain requested aquatics. This is an excellent way to build customer loyalty while simultaneously gathering market research. Your request list should also note details whenever a customer asks for a particular aquatic, even if no formal request is made. Review the lists and your sales/inventory records regularly to see if anything should be changed in the next plant order.

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**Aquatic Plant Purchasing Mistakes**

- Making poor plant selections when new to the business – rely upon your supplier for recommendations
- Buying aquatics that are illegal in your state – be aware of the invasives on your State and Federal lists
- Picking up a load of plants in an uncovered vehicle – protect the aquatics from sun, wind, and drying air
- Not allowing a substitute if a particular variety isn’t available
- Waiting a month to report a problem with your order to the supplier
- Ordering on-site from a retail/wholesale operation without identifying yourself as wholesale until the sale is rung up
- Assuming the supplier will know that you only want hardy lilies...ASSUME NOTHING, SPECIFY EVERYTHING
Re-potting Bare Root or Plugs

1. Grow material.
2. This is a typical plug ready to be replanted into a larger container.
3. Wash free of soil.
4. Cut into sections.
5. Separate and trim roots.
6. Bareroot ready to be planted - fertilize at the same time
7. Add remaining soil.
8. Gravel top dress

Photos by Maryland Aquatic Nursery
Speaking of change…your customers will soon let you know what they prefer through their purchases. Those should be the core (85-90%) of what you stock. However new and different aquatics should be added to your inventory with every restocking. Aquatics with different leaf forms, dwarf varieties, variegated leaves, and new water lily hybrids should be part of your orders on a regular basis. You don’t need to stock many of them, but at least enough to encourage return visits from your regular customers and to show that you carry the latest and the greatest, unlike the local Big Box. New aquatics also rank high on the impulse purchase list.

Select a Supplier

The ideal supplier is knowledgeable, has consistent quality plant material, offers a wide variety, and has good prices. Who you will buy from often boils down to a choice between mail order or local suppliers. The mail order growers may have a wider variety of aquatics and size range of plants. However they usually only ship barefoot or plugs. Their prices may be better but freight must be factored into the total cost.

Aquatics are bought in pots, plugs, and bareroot.

Using local growers is often the most convenient option. This will enable you to get potted aquatics without hefty freight costs. You may also be able to get local plants more quickly, although last minute orders and changes don’t go over well with any supplier. Check the quality, quantity, and variety of offerings. As with any supplier, submit a few orders to evaluate the service and plants.

Evaluate Shipping Options

If your order must be shipped, be sure to order enough to make the additional freight costs worthwhile. If you order at least 4 to 5 boxes of plants, it may be cheaper to have them shipped airfreight. However this requires a trip to the airport. UPS and FedEx ground generally are fine if you are located within 500 miles of the grower. If you are farther away or the weather is hot it might be necessary to use 2nd day ground service.

Find the Perfect Aquatic Plant

Aquatics are bought in pots, plugs, and bareroot. Potted aquatic plants should be well rooted with healthy balanced growth, and the pots should be filled out. Plugs should also be well rooted. Bare root plants should have healthy live roots and robust foliage.

The plants should not have any hitchhikers, although it’s almost impossible to eliminate duckweed and azolla in large growing ponds. You should always carefully examine new aquatics. After carefully rinsing them off, it may make sense to keep them in a special holding tank where any unwanted freeloaders can be eliminated.

Best Values for the Money

Order well in advance, no later than a week before the plants are needed. This will help assure that you get the best selection and plants in the best condition.

Leaving the choice of individual plants up to the supplier (either mail order or local) can result in excellent values. You MUST give them plenty of notice as well as the dollar amount of the order, the rough proportion of plant types (floater, water lilies, submerged, and so forth), and the proportion of hardy or non-hardy for your climate. If you want to leave the entire selection up to them, let them know.

When using a local supplier, they generally prefer to deliver your order rather than have you pick it up. This requires less handling of the plants, less of their time, and is much easier to schedule. If you must order at the last minute to replace stock from a very successful weekend, then order early in the week. A potted aquatic plant from a local supplier will often be your best value. It doesn’t require any additional potting and can be sold immediately.

Plugs are often the best compromise for those who can’t get local delivery. They can either be sold as a finished product or potted up for sale later in the season. Since there isn’t much transplant shock and aquatic grow very quickly, they may be ready for sale as a larger plant within a few weeks. Plugs are an excellent value, since they are about the same price as bareroot.

About the Author

Paula Biles was diagnosed at an early age with CPO (chronic plant obsession) and after graduate school the condition became severe. The constant compulsion to have growing leaves and muddy hands led to an obvious treatment – water gardening.

Her therapy involved a steady dose of teaching and writing about water gardens and aquatics. Rehabilitation was slow at first, but before long she was lecturing, her articles and photographs were published, plus she was speaking before local and national groups – the perfect remedy for this affliction.

The last components of her successful treatment were to establish a local pond club, work as managing editor of Pondkeeper Magazine (now Pond Biz Magazine), and serve as executive director of the International Waterlily & Water Gardening Society (IWGS), then travel to the Amazon and Thailand.

Paula is married and lives in Bradenton, Florida, where thanks to water gardening, her disease is now in remission.

On a more formal note, Paula belongs to the Garden Writers Association and has been a regular columnist for numerous hobbyist and trade Ponds & Gardens, Nursery Retailer, and Garden Center. Her articles and photographs have appeared countless times in water garden magazines, newspapers, books, and online.

Paula can be reached at: pods@AboutTheLotus.com or through K & P Projects’ website: www.AboutTheLotus.com
When selling koi it is critical that the salesperson listens first and talks second. This is true with all sales, and particularly so with koi sales. By carefully listening and asking questions a sales person can determine what a particular customers’ hot buttons are. What is the emotional need that buying a koi today will fulfill?

People buy koi for a myriad of different reasons – new pond, lost a fish recently, blue and need something to cheer them up, a present for a friend or spouse, koi show coming up, friends coming over to visit, or just koi fever. If you can find out what the emotional need is, and help your customer fulfill that need it becomes a win-win.

A salesperson also needs to listen to what kind of koi keeper the customer is. Is this a person who thinks of koi as pets, naming them and doting over them? Is the passion finding high quality koi, and learning how to select koi that will improve their collection? Is this person looking for something impressive right now, “give me big now, I don’t have time to wait.” Are they looking for something different? Are they a bargain hunter looking for the least expensive koi per inch, or a value hunter looking for young koi that will improve over time, and grow into good quality koi in a few years?

All koi have something unique going for them if you look hard enough. Practice looking for those attributes, and matching them up with customers who that appeals to.

Asking questions can help you as a salesperson determine what your customer is really looking for, aside
from a particular variety and price alone, and this gives you a definite leg up towards filling the emotional need, and making a sale.

In our look at selling Kujaku we will focus on the variables that give you something to talk about as your customer is considering a purchase. Often customers want to be directed to one koi or another, trusting the dealer to select the best koi available, based on their price and interests. Often you will be called upon to critique a koi or compare one against another. Helping you confidently discuss and sell the koi in your inventory is what this article is all about.

**With Kujaku, there are the following major variables:**

- Sheen and Luster
- Clean Reticulation
- Clean Head
- Clean White Ground
- Nicely Balanced Hi (red) Plates
- Depth of Hi
- Cleanliness of Fins

**Sheen and Luster**

Since Kujaku is a metallic koi, the sheen and luster of the koi is the first criteria to look at. If it is dull it will not catch the eye as well as one that is bright and shiny. You will see that right away when you put two fish in a tub. The one with the best sheen catches the eye first. Now we all know we need to sell the koi with the lesser sheen too, so your job is to find other attributes to discuss when selling that koi. Look at the back behind the head and the pectoral fins to see the best sheen. On the top koi shown below, the sheen on the back is striking but just average on the bottom koi.

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**Defining Kujaku**

*by Joel Burkard, Pan Intercorp*

The Kujaku is a metallic or Ogon koi with the reticulated net-like pattern of the Asagi on its back. This is overlaid with either a gold, yellow, orange or red Kohaku-type pattern creating a striking effect.

Created by crossing a Goshiki with a Hikarimeji, its full name is Kujaku Ogon, or in English, “Peacock.”

The development of high quality Kujaku has led to their being judged in a category of their own at recent koi shows.

Created in the early 1960’s by Mr. “Nishi” Hirasawa of Hiranishi Fish Farms, the Kujaku was originally included in the Hikarimoyo category. In recent years Kujaku (literally “Peacock”) have received a lot of attention and with their increasing popularity, are often judged in a category of their own.

Because it is a metallic koi, the sheen and luster of the skin are considered one of the most important points to look for.

Whether the head has color or not, it should be clear and not congested-looking. The fins should be vibrant and unblemished.

The clarity of the reticulation (fukurin) on the net pattern is also important but often remains undeveloped until the koi is two or three years old.

The overlay pattern whether of gold, yellow, orange or red, is commonly referred to as the beni (literally “red”). The beni on the Kujaku should be uniform in its intensity, but should allow the net pattern to show through from underneath.

Since there are so many variables on a Kujaku, one has to be prepared to forgive a fault or two, or pay the price for an exquisite specimen. When selecting any koi, it is better to concentrate on the koi’s strengths and attributes rather than to focus on its shortcomings.
Clean Reticulation

Reticulation is the black net pattern ① that is seen on top of the other colors in Kujaku and a few other varieties. This reticulation can be light and delicate, ② or dark and heavy, and everything in between. The thing to look for and point out is the evenness of the markings. If every scale has the same size and depth of black markings, ③ and the scales line up in nice rows, this is a very beautiful feature and something you can point out. If not, look at other attributes of the koi. ④

Clean Head

A clean head is something you can talk about in many different varieties of koi. In Kujaku a dirty head usually refers to black smudges ① on the head that are un-attractive. Some black, if it is symmetrical, such as above the eyes like eyebrows can be very appealing and can sell a koi all by itself. It is cute. If the koi has a clean head, ② it makes the koi look healthy and strong and by now you know the drill – it gives you something to use to help a customer make a decision.

Clean White Ground

The Japanese call the white skin between color patches or plates, the ground. In Japanese it is called shiroji. On Kujaku the whiter the better. If it looks like porcelain it can be stunning.
Nicely Balanced Hi (red) Plates

The hi or red patches on a Kujaku are just like the hi on a Kohaku except on a metallic koi. They look best if they are somewhat large and well balanced front to back and left to right. White as well as red on the head is the most attractive usually.

Depth of Hi

There can be a difference in how solid or “thick” the hi plates appear on a Kujaku. The color is most impressive if there are no areas that look thin, like a single coat of paint.

Cleanliness of Fins

If a Kujaku’s pectoral fins have blotchy black on them it detracts from the overall appearance of the koi. If the fins are bright shiny white, they add dramatically to the overall impact of the koi.
Other Variables -

Red or Orange

Kujaku red ① can be quite dark and rich or nearly yellow, ② and again, everything in between. They are all Kujaku. Consistent color is what to point out. Suggest one of each color.

Doitsu

Doitsu is the term for the scaleless version of a koi ③. In some varieties of koi, being doitsu may not make a great deal of difference in the appearance of that koi. In Kujaku the difference is huge. Since doitsu means scaleless, and one major defining variable in the Kujaku is the net pattern on the scales, how can there even be a Doitsu Kujaku? Black can still appear on the skin, ④ which would still qualify it as a Kujaku, but it is not usually very appealing. What is quite attractive is when there is a row of scales down the top of the back of the koi, ⑤ splitting into two parallel rows at the dorsal fin. If these scales have black reticulation on them, then you have a fine Doitsu Kujaku.

The Doitsu Kujaku can be very striking. It really looks like a completely different fish. The biggest thing to watch for is symmetrical scalation. Note how interesting the scales can look if they are nice even rows down the back of the koi.

So, remember, you don’t want to talk down your koi, you want to point out their differing strengths. These strengths are what combine to make the koi beautiful. Keep these attributes in mind for those customers who seem to want to learn about selecting koi, and those who are having a difficult time deciding on which one to buy. A gentle suggestion from you at the right time may be all it takes to get a koi on its way out the door and on its way to a new home. ☞
When Working in Your Customer’s Garden Beware of Plants That Bite
Hogweed – Giant Cousin of the Carrot Plagues Backyard Gardeners – With Blisters and Burns

by Lee Van Wychen

When Spring finally arrives and your customers garden’s are in full bloom, their lawns regain their lustrous green color and glisten with morning dew, while the tulips and daffodils beautify the landscape – beware. If you’re tempted to get outside and prepare those flowerbeds for the onset of Summer, make certain you’re prepared. You may run into weeds that can irritate or blister your skin.

Well-known garden plants such as carrots, parsnip and dill have cousins with some nasty characteristics. Giant Hogweed (Heracleum mantegazzianum), common hogweed (Heracleum sphondylium) and their hybrids were introduced into the United States from Europe in the early 1900s as showy garden ornamentals. But they can pack a painful punch.

In addition to being dangerous, Giant Hogweed also is highly invasive, especially along waterways.

Another invasive weed that causes watery blisters and burns is wild parsnip (Pastinaca sativa). Our native cow parsnip (H. lanatum) and Angelica species also irritate skin if exposed directly to the sap, but to a much lesser degree than their giant cousins from Europe. All are members of the carrot family. These showy plants contain a clear, watery sap that can produce irritation or blisters on the skin when triggered by sunlight. Giant Hogweed is the worst offender, though, because of its sheer size and the quantity of sap produced.

Melissa Bravo, manager of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture’s Giant Hogweed Program and a member of the Weed Science Society of America, warns that protection is the best policy.

“Contact with Giant Hogweed leaves or stems can easily burn skin and lead to painful blisters that form within 48 hrs if exposed to direct sunlight,” Bravo said. As the blisters heal, they often become darkly pigmented purple blotches or scars that can last a few months or, in the worst cases, can be permanent. You really have to wear gloves, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when working around Giant Hogweed.

Giant Hogweed is a perennial or long-lived biennial that grows in a rosette until a flower stalk bolts. Multiple leaves as large as three- to five-feet long are deeply divided and lobed. Both leaves and stems are covered in fine prickly hairs, and stems are often tinged with purple blotches. Flowering plants can attain heights of 15’ in fertile flowerbeds, with umbrella-like clusters of flowers that look much like Queen Anne’s lace and measure up to 2’ across.

In addition to being dangerous, Giant Hogweed also is highly invasive, especially along waterways. It was declared a federal noxious weed in 1983, and several states have begun eradication programs to assist property owners with infestations in flowerbeds, yards, stream banks, roadsides and forest edges.

Fortunately, Giant Hogweed has limited distribution in the United States, and local efforts to eradicate this invasive plant are achieving success. Currently 16 states have wild populations of Giant Hogweed, including: Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, Wisconsin and Vermont.
For more information on Giant Hogweed, contact your state department of agriculture or the USDA’s program manager for Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services in your area. Information about Giant Hogweed and other invasive plants is also available from Lee Van Wychen, Director of Science Policy for the Weed Science Society of America, at: 202-746-4686 (www.wssa.net).

**About the Weed Science Society of America**

The Weed Science Society of America, a nonprofit professional society, was founded in 1956 to encourage and promote the development of knowledge concerning weeds and their impact on the environment. The Weed Science Society of America promotes research, education and extension outreach activities related to weeds, provides science-based information to the public and policy makers, and fosters awareness of weeds and their impacts on managed and natural ecosystems. For more information, visit: [www.wssa.net](http://www.wssa.net).

For more information on hogweed, visit: [www.agriculture.state.pa.us/agriculture/lib/agriculture/plantindustryfiles/hogweed11-17.pdf](http://www.agriculture.state.pa.us/agriculture/lib/agriculture/plantindustryfiles/hogweed11-17.pdf) [www.weeds.psu.edu/hogweed.pdf](http://www.weeds.psu.edu/hogweed.pdf)

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**Have a favorite product you want to share with us?**

If you let us know about these products we will include them in upcoming issue of Pond Biz Magazine and our web site at: [www.pondbizmag.com](http://www.pondbizmag.com)

E-mail press releases or your experiences with these products to Cindy at: cindy@tcpubinc.com
Exhibitor News

Thank you for participating as a vendor at the 2008 PONDAPALOOZA National Pond Expo & Conference held in Baltimore, MD August 1st-7th. It was GREAT to see you and spend the week with your representatives. Despite the planning time constraints we had due to the unexpected relocation from St. Louis to Baltimore this year, and the overall sluggish economy, we feel the event was very successful due, to a large extent, your involvement. We hope that it was very successful show for your business and that you were able to make some profitable contacts. Here’s what some of your fellow vendors had to say this year:

“Of all the shows we’ve exhibited at, this was the most profitable show for us in two years!”

“We wouldn’t miss it. Not only is it the most profitable show for us, it’s the only show that directly targets the pond and water feature industry.”

We realize how much time, effort and expense it takes to plan and execute an exhibit and we want you to know how much we appreciate the decision you made to choose PONDAPALOOZA to showcase your company, your products and your services this year.

We also hope you are looking forward to 2009 when our expanded and totally reformatted event will be held at the Sheraton Portland Airport in Portland, OR, immediately following the Farwest Show (Oregon Association of Nurseries). The timing will make it possible for both exhibitors and attendees to take advantage of two events in one trip.

We plan to take very aggressive measures to boost the attendance and the scope of next years annual conference including:

• Piggybacking on a national green industry trade show to build interest and attendance
• Focusing on professional business, specialty merchandising and cutting edge installation seminars
• An expanded, yet intimate trade show floor, to include both indoor and outdoor exhibits

• Outdoor “how-to” builds and demonstrations…we’re taking some of the classrooms outdoors
• An aggressive advertising and marketing approach to begin in November 2008—targeting retailers, installers and the “green” and outdoor living markets
• Redesigning our website to bring more benefits to our exhibitors and sponsors
• Lower general registration fees to entice a larger number of attendees
• Attractive host hotel rates, FREE airport shuttle service, FREE parking for event participants, FREE guest perks and meal plans at our host hotel
• Visible, affordable sponsorship opportunities to bring your company name to the forefront

We held PONDAPALOOZA in Portland twice before and both times proved to be very successful and well-attended. Portland is a beautiful area and currently one of the hottest markets for the pond and water feature industry.

PLEASE mark the dates on your 2009 calendar now. Exhibitor information will be coming by mail and e-mail soon.

Web Site Name Changes
www.pondkeeper.com is now the home of the PondBiz Magazine. PONDAPALOOZA will fall under another site: www.gardenpondpromotions.com. Please make a note of it. Once up and running, you will be able to link from one to another.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions please give me a call at 814-695-4727. I would welcome your call.

videorose@aol.com • www.gardenpondpromotions.com
Robert “Bob” Heideman

It is with great sadness that Aquatic Eco-Systems, Inc., announces the passing of its founder and former President, Robert “Bob” Heideman, at the age of 59. Mr. Heideman passed away quietly in his home last week after a yearlong battle with lung cancer.

After serving his country as a Navy Seal, Bob Heideman turned his interest in lake and wastewater aeration into a business, founding Aquatic Eco-Systems in 1978. Though at first it was necessary to keep part-time jobs as a carpenter and bartender to finance his dream, he quickly developed his company into an industry leader. Bob actively served as President until 2007, and he remained a valued advisor to the company’s Board of Directors until his passing. The fruit of his labor is a global aquaculture company that today has 150 employees operating out of a 139,000-sq.ft. warehouse/office building in Apopka, Florida.

Bob led a very active personal life, fueled by a sense of adventure and exploration, which included a solo kayak trip to the Arctic Circle and an ultralight flight to the Amazon to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Columbus’ landing in America. Bob also devoted much of his time to community service, including the Bear Lake Preservation Society, Little League baseball, national and global aquaculture societies, and the Grant Committee for the Institute of Humanist Studies, where he served as chairman. He mentored many young entrepreneurs and can be credited for helping launch dozens of small businesses.

Todd Childress, President of Aquatic Eco-Systems, commented, “As a pioneer in the aquaculture industry, Bob was an inspiration to so many, and a true hero to the environment. Bob cared about our environment and our natural resources many years before it was the ‘trendy’ thing to do. Bob has left a legacy that we—and generations to come—can all be proud of, and he is a terrific example of how one individual can make a difference.”

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Bob’s name to the Institute of Humanist Studies or the Hospice of the Comforter.

Founded in 1978, Aquatic Eco-Systems (AES) has become the largest source of aquatic products and systems worldwide. AES caters to a variety of aquatic interests and industries, from aquaculture and lake management to aquariums and water gardens.

For more information about AES, visit www.AquaticEco.com.
Bury the Hatchet

Eric Triplett, Eco-System Pond specialist and Kent Wallace, Koi Pond Filtration specialist have been collaborating on projects for the past 18 months after a ceremonial “Burying of the Hatchet” next to a pond in Savannah, Georgia at Pondapalooza, a trade industry event. Burying the Hatchet was a symbolic step in a movement to bring the water garden and koi pond worlds a step closer for the betterment of the industry.

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Pocket Sized Guide to Koi a Good Impulse Sale Item or Gift

The Koi Collector’s Pocket Guide is a handy compact fan folded, laminated card, featuring photos and descriptions of the major koi varieties, plus an illustrated glossary of key Japanese koi terms.

- High quality photos of all major koi varieties
- Descriptions of over 40 different koi varieties
- Glossary of key koi terminology, with photos
- Pronunciation guide

Dimensions are 24” wide by 9” tall.

The Guide is laminated, it can go out to the pond to help koi keepers learn the proper names of the koi in their collections without getting damaged.

Order online at gardensidepubs.com or call 888-356-9895 for quantity pricing
Recession Power:
How Great Companies Rise to the Top, Even in Down Times

by Denise Corcoran

• Are you tired of hearing all the “doom and gloom” forecasts regarding our current economy?

• Do you find yourself obsessing with worry and fear about the potential impact on your business?

• Are you ready to shift from victim mentality and knee-jerk reactions to opportunistic thinking and proactive strategies to profit even in recessionary times?

“Recession” is one of the most distorted, counterproductive words in the English language! Its mere use engenders a strong emotional response – from consumers and businesses alike – ranging from fear and pessimism to total sense of defeat.

However, recessions are neither negative nor bad in themselves.

Yes, we are in an economic downturn that may get worse before it gets better. However, recessions are neither negative nor bad in themselves. Recessions are “contractionary” periods, that force us to get more conscious about money and our spending, get rid of waste and conserve our resources where most needed. Call it the “yin” and “yang” of economic cycles.

Warning: It Is Your Beliefs About the Recession That Can Be Fatal To Your Business

Our economy and our businesses go through similar expansion and contraction phases. Why so many people – and perhaps you are one of them – sink to despair or paralyzed with fear by the word “recession” is because of your beliefs about recession and the meaning you give to the word.

“Recession IS strictly a matter of perception.”
– Denise Corcoran

How you perceive and respond to a recession will determine whether your business grows profitably or fights for survival. Here are the top 7 reasons why great companies thrive during a recession and how you can do the same.

Top 7 Reasons Why Great Companies Rise To The Top, Even During Recessionary Times

1. Great companies transform external threats into opportunities.

The Japanese are masters at crisis management and look at situations like recessions as polarities. I.e., neither all good nor all bad, but a mixture of both. The Japanese symbol for crises is a representation of two separate symbols: danger and opportunity. Such a perspective encourages responsiveness – not reactivity. As a result, the Japanese focus not on the problem, but on new solutions...not on survivability, but on growth...not on short-term losses, but long-term prospects.

How are you perceiving the current downturn – as a threat or an opportunity? How have you reacted to past recessions? How might the recession actually be an opportunity for your business?

2. Great companies take advantage of and profit from changing dynamics in the marketplace.

A business can grow and profit during a recession if it understands the underlying dynamics of the marketplace. Crises tend to stimulate change in people. The challenge is
to respond to such changes in a timely and direct fashion. To take advantage of these shifts, it is critical to address the 5 “W’s.”

- **WHO**
  Who is doing the buying now? Although overall spending may be down, such trends cannot be generalized across all industries and business segments. Buying behavior shifts, changes and refocuses more than it declines. What new markets can you address that are actually on the rise?

- **WHAT**
  What needs and benefits are priorities for your customers at this time? Are there new products or services that might address these shifts or serve as alternatives to satisfy the status quo?

- **WHEN**
  What needs must the customer have satisfied now vs later? What special incentives will motivate the consumer to buy today?

- **WHERE**
  During a downturn, customers often rethink their buying loyalties. From what sources are they currently buying? How can you make your products more accessible to your target market to buy?

- **WHY**
  The “why” addresses customers’ underlying motivations for buying. What motivations are driving customers’ buying decisions today? What are customers’ expectations of the future? How will these expectations affect their buying behavior today?

### 3. Great companies catalyze seemingly “negative” times into positive moves.

In recessionary times, great companies aggressively look for the “silver lining in the cloud” and mobilize resources to seize those hidden opportunities. They act, not react.

**Crises tend to stimulate change in people. The challenge is to respond to such changes in a timely and direct fashion.**

The winners are those who recognize that their future is not determined by external events, but by their response to those events. They stay focused on what they have control over, and respond proactively to those they can’t control.

What positive moves can you take instead of reacting to the recession? How might you better utilize your resources to seize hidden growth and profit opportunities?

### 4. Great companies make room for new growth by “de-cluttering” that which is marginal or ineffective.

During times of growth and expansion, it’s easy to get hooked into over-spending, “over-doing” and over-confidence. Sloppy behaviors, attitudes and habits often creep in and get masked. All too often, companies go unconscious about important basics and become oblivious to “waste.”

Great companies take advantage of down times to de-clutter “excesses” – for example, any drains on time, money or people resources generating little or no return. They scale back to what they do best in order to be at their best. They make room for new growth and profits.

What overhead, projects or activities are draining your company’s resources? What products, services or customers are clogging your profit pipeline and need to be shed? What operational “fat” must you trim to become a lean profitable enterprise, especially during this current recession?

### 5. Great companies build their resilience muscle to thrive in tough times.

In the 21st Century, accelerating change, increasing complexity and escalating risks have become the new business reality. To withstand external shocks that can destroy a business, a company must build its resilience capacity.

**For these companies, recessions motivate them to get closer to their customers, reassess their direction, and take action in new and creative ways.**

Resilience, first, is a mindset. Resilience thinking transforms uncertainty into confidence, fear into action and adversity into advantage. On an organizational level, resilience comes from a strong culture based on operational flexibility, employee loyalty and team collaboration.

Great companies don’t just rebound from a one-time crisis or setback. They build the capacity to expect the unexpected and continuously reinvent business models and strategies as circumstances change. They build their resilience muscle.

On a scale of 1–10, how resilient is your company right now in bouncing back from crises or setbacks? What next steps can you take today to build a capacity to expect and respond to tomorrow’s unexpected?

### 6. Great companies aggressively position themselves ahead of the competition during economic downturns.

During economic downturns, most companies go on the defensive – cutting back costs, downsizing marketing efforts and commoditizing products and services – just to survive.

Great companies do just the opposite. In recessionary times, they position themselves to win—ramping up promotions, accelerating new product introductions, and keeping a visible profile. By taking advantage of the emerging opportunities, they not only differentiate themselves during the downturn but also position themselves for explosive growth after its turnaround.

Is your business taking an offensive or defensive position right now? What three aggressive strategies can your business take to keep a visible profile in the marketplace? How might your competitors’ defensive reactions become your opportunities for new growth and profits?
7. Great companies find the “learning” and the “grander purpose” hidden within challenging times.

Our greatest challenges are our greatest teachers. Their “grander purpose” is to shift our thinking, behaviors, strategies and actions and ultimately aid us in our future growth.

Companies negatively impacted by a recession never see the grander purpose such times can offer them. Instead, they perceive only the worst, react out of fear and shrink to a victim mentality.

Great companies, on the other hand, see recessions as learning opportunities. They recognize that yesterday’s thinking and strategies will not address today’s challenges. For these companies, recessions motivate them to get closer to their customers, reassess their direction, and take action in new and creative ways. Their rise to the top is often a by-product of their beliefs, attitudes and responses to such challenging times.

How are yesterday’s thinking and strategies holding you back today? What new attitudes and actions must you adopt to thrive in the current downturn? How might your company become a better company as a result of the recession?

Whether your company survives or thrives during a recession is, at least 85%, within your control. You control how you perceive it, how you respond to it and how you learn and grow from it. If seen in the right light, an economic downturn can be a blessing in disguise. Those businesses that do will rise to the top. Will you be one of them? ☞

About the Author

Denise Corcoran – Business and Leadership Coach, Strategist and CEO, The Empowered Business™ – assists emerging companies to reach the top of their business game and develop world-class leadership teams, organizations and cultures. For more information, go to: www.empoweredbusiness.com or email at denise@empoweredbusiness.com
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Made in America

Start Indoors Anytime and Replant Outdoors in Warm Weather
by Heather Woolf
Southeastern Aquatic Escapes

I am becoming accustomed to the surprised looks on my clients’ faces the first time we meet. Not only am I small, I am also a woman. The combination makes them wonder if I am capable of handling the physical challenges necessary to install water features. Once I begin to work they realize I am equal to the task, but in this male-dominated industry I must prove myself with each new project.

According to Rick Bartel, a Certified Master Water Feature Instructor and Program Administrator for the Savio Water Feature Institute, there are thousands of installers in the United States but less than 1% are female. Women may actually offer some advantages that men may not.
that men may not. An increasing number of clients are women and “female consumers now represent a huge amount of buying power in the industry and we are seeing a significant increase in the number of women looking for contractors for their home improvement projects,” said Craig Lucas, president of Renovation Experts. “Many of them are uneasy, (if not out-and-out intimidated), dealing with male contractors; so dealing with a woman can alleviate that gender-related anxiety.”

One of my own clients shared with me; that she had another contractor bid on a project I did for her, and simply wasn’t comfortable with a man being in her home while her husband was out of town. Gender stereotypes also aid me in landing contracts. Women are often perceived as better designers. While this may or may not be true, such perceptions play a large part in the way people mentally gauge another person’s skill and ability. Right or wrong, design and styling are typically considered the domain of women and this bias works in my favor.

**Women are often perceived as better designers.**

Gender bias can benefit women in other ways. “Most of my clients say that they think women pay more attention to detail,” said Linda Johnstone, owner of a general contracting company. “They also say we’re more likely to clean up after ourselves following a completed project and making sure that everything is the way it should be.” Some of my own clients have told me that I listened to their needs and adhered to their budgets better than my competitors were able to. Rather than trying to sell them something that they really didn’t want, I gave them alternatives.

My gender makes my job easier at times. When I go into a project, I don’t carry preconceived notions about how tasks are traditionally executed; therefore, I can look at a design challenge from a different perspective. When normal construction techniques call for plumbing to be routed around a wall by hand digging, or by using heavy trenchers that are difficult for me to transport, I will use a hammer drill and go through the wall. By doing so, I spend less time, which will increase my productivity time and reduce labor.

Finding sub-contractors that I can work with is imperative. Not only do they offer specialized services that I depend on, but hiring them also averts legal situations. If electrical work is required, I hire an electrician because they are licensed for such work. I also know that when I bring in others; such as masons or plumbers for larger projects; I can provide clients with a more professional product without jeopardizing quality and safety. With years of experience in their field, I know my team of specialists can offer alternatives that may benefit my client. I also have them sign a sub-contractor agreement that strictly lays out the penalty for sexual harassment. By doing so, I know that I can trust them to do the work without such hostilities, or they will forfeit profits and possibly costs.

I also believe that it is beneficial for female contractors to become involved in professional organizations within the water feature industry. One study printed in the American Journal of...
Health Care Pharmacy states, “Research has shown that women in male-dominated fields place more success values than do women in other fields. It is important that women in male-dominated professions become actively involved in professional organizations to facilitate their gaining a professional identity.” Continuing education offerings from such organizations can also be highly beneficial. I have been able to learn about some of the more traditional building techniques and methods, which I can then combine with my less conventional approaches, thereby producing a more desirable finished product in less time. It also provides me with an opportunity to dispel some of the negative stereotypes and territorial attitudes of my male colleagues.

Seminars and conventions offer the opportunity to show that I am not out of my element. Sexist remarks are sometimes made before I am able to show that I am competent as this is yet another stark reminder that I have to constantly and consistently demonstrate my abilities to my peers in order to earn their respect and trust.

More and more women are entering male-dominated fields. As the New York Times reports, “It is just the beginning of a trend, but it is a real one.”

The Center for Women’s Business Research in Washington reports that “the fastest growth in women’s entrepreneurship is found among businesses not typically associated with them, like construction and transportation.” Women are looking at the challenges and finding ways to overcome many handicaps.

Water feature installation will more than likely remain primarily the province of men, but women certainly have a great deal to contribute. While stereotypes might help women in some respects, hard work and attention to detail is what generates positive client recommendations to their friends, neighbors and work associates, which are essential for building any successful business. Remember, it isn’t always about how much you can lift as much as it is about where you place it.

Sources
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- American Journal of Health Care Pharmacy
- Renovationexperts.com, Craig Lucas
- New York Times Small Business: Breaking into more male strongholds, Marci Alboher Nusbaum

About the Author

Heather Woolf and Jared Collier

Heather Woolf is the owner and operator of Aquatic Escapes in Chattanooga, TN. Aquatic Escapes specializes in water feature construction, repair, design, and maintenance. She can be reached at: 423-505-5056.

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January/February 2009 PONDBIZ 53
by Freddie Combas
Director of External Affairs, IPPCA

The International Professional Pond Contractor's Association (IPPCA) held its 4th Annual INFO TANZA event October 2–4, 2008 at the Hilton Garden Inn Wildwood, located in northern Atlanta, Georgia. The name INFO TANZA stands for Industry wide Educational and Informational Extravaganza and Symposium. Education and information exchange are the association's main objectives for the event.

INFO TANZA is a 3-day event packed with informational seminars, equipment/product reviews, networking and round-table discussions. There is also an annual meeting and award dinner on the evening of the 3rd day. Amongst other topics and items of note, the winners of the 5-STAR Contractor Program and the International Waterfall & Stream Competition are recognized. The event also serves as the IPPCA's Annual Members Meeting where the Association and the pond industry's past, present and future are discussed.

This year’s INFO TANZA debuted a Table-Top Trade Show at which manufacturers and distributors displayed their products and equipment on days 2 and 3. On the afternoon of day 2, attendees had the option to visit the site of the IPPCA's annual Ponditat For Humanity pond recipient, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite, for a formal dedication and fish release into the new pond. This pond was built along the lines of the theme for this year's INFO TANZA, “Resource Smart Contractors.” With high efficiency external pumps, skimmers, bottom drain, pre-filter, nitrate remediating bog area and state of the art dual filtration capacities, this pond set the bar at a higher level than seen before in “pond build” events.

Thursday, day one, started the event with an introduction to the IPPCA's Resource Smart Contractor Program given by Dave Jones, owner of The Pond Professional and IPPCA's Executive Director and Chairman of the Board. The Resource Smart Contractor Program was developed primarily to provide contractors with the necessary knowledge and tools to aid them in the design and construction of highly-efficient ponds and waterscapes.

The Resource Smart Contractor Program's intent is to evolve and be formalized into a state of the art educational event to certify those contractors that have taken and passed the necessary field work, courses and exams to achieve an understanding of the electrical usage of pumps, water usage and water loss in water features, as well as utilize current technologies, methodologies and cutting edge equipment to achieve the “Resource Smart Pond.” These contractors will be able to design and build water features that will have less electrical consumption along with less water usage and less evaporation. This eco-friendly and “Green” approach to water feature design and construction is the way of the future for the pond and waterscape industry. The IPPCA understands that we are stewards of these valuable natural resources and that we must do everything possible to be “Resource Smart” in their use.

Bill Brannon from Alpha Biosystems (www.Alpha-Bugs.com) and Warren Franz from Great Lakes Bio (www.GLB-Enzymes.com) followed with seminars geared to the importance of better understanding the workings of the bacterial system and enzymes in ponds. The latter seminar also explored in depth the importance of aeration in large pond and lake applications. From the rookie installer to the seasoned pro, all walked away with new information.

The Networking Buffet Lunch was followed by a seminar titled “Minimizing water loss in design and plant choices with sensitivity to invasive species: Plants, Fish, Crustaceans, Reptiles, Mollusks, and so
forth.” This seminar led right into an explanation and discussion of the IPPCA Legislative Action Team (LAT) and Bio Safety Team (BST). The IPPCA LAT was organized out of the need for contractors and the pond industry to be represented in case current or future legislation might impair, limit or prohibit the installation, repair, renovation or maintenance of ornamental ponds or water features.

The IPPCA has already been involved in such cases. Earlier this year members of the IPPCA LAT flew to Washington D.C. to meet face-to-face with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in reference to their “voluntary participation” Water Sense New Home program. Under this EPA program, ornamental ponds were to be banned from new home construction in order to receive the EPA “Water Sense” label. The IPPCA argued their point and as a result, the EPA acknowledged that changes needed to be made to the verbiage as to ornamental ponds and not ban them from the EPA “Water Sense” label.

The IPPCA LAT also argued a proposed law in Wisconsin that would ban ponds with koi to be built outside if the pond was not totally covered or protected. After a few phone calls, the IPPCA was notified that this was not the intent and that clarification of the text would be made. In the EPA case, their objection to ponds was the incorrectly perceived high water usage of ponds and waterscapes. In the Wisconsin case, the objection to ponds was the possibility of introduction of non-indigenous and invasive fish and plants into the local lakes and streams. In both cases the IPPCA LAT and BST were able to work with these agencies in developing a program that would better serve all involved while protecting all natural resources.

Mike White, owner of White Water Filters (www.WhiteWaterFilters.com), discussed the importance of growing a hobbyist branch of the IPPCA. Mike comes to the IPPCA via the traditional koi pond side of the industry and brings many years of knowledge and expertise as to the design and construction of traditional koi ponds. This seminar explained the mind-set and intent of the koi pond hobbyist and how it at times differs from that of a water garden hobbyist and the water garden contractor. This was Mike’s segway into the introduction to everyone of IPaWGS (International Pond and Water Garden Society) and its mission: “To Promote, Protect and Advance the Pond, Water Garden and Fish Keeping Hobbies.”

IPaWGS will serve as a valuable link between contractors and hobbyists as a neutral entity to provide the dissemination of current and fact based information as it pertains to ponds and water gardens. There will be local chapters established nationwide such as the one that Mike established in September. In his first meeting Mike had over 60 attendees and by the end of the evening had over 30 paid ‘household’ memberships. A portion of IPaWGS Membership fees will help in the funding of the IPPCA LAT and BST. For more information on establishing an IPaWGS Chapter or becoming a member visit www.IPaWGS.com.

Jay Bearfield and Joel Police co-chaired an Open Forum on IPPCA’s past, present and future that led to a very positive and productive round table meeting. Many topics were touched upon and addressed. INFO TANZA 08’s first day ended with a Happy Hour and an active networking dinner.

On day 2, Phil Ross, representing Warren Thoma Associates & EasyPro Manufacturing gave Friday’s first seminar. Mr. Ross discussed the importance of understanding how to properly choose an energy efficient pump. This seminar discussed friction loss and how to calculate head pressure. He also explained the importance of selecting the right type of pump for the application and also how different pipe sizes play a role in the pump selection and its efficiency. The information received in this seminar will take the guessing out of choosing a pump for your next project!

INFO TANZA has always offered seminars on related fields or industries that might be of interest to its members. This is done to explore both other streams of income and also to discuss other possible equipment or methodologies that might be of use to the pond contractor. A few years ago, passive and active water features were discussed in the use for bioremediation of runoff water for neighborhoods. Last year how to build your own low-pressure polyurea system was discussed. This year, Mark Brown (www.raincatchers.net) showed how all attendees present were letting money go down the drain with the rain. Mr. Brown’s seminar on rainwater harvesting demonstrated not only how recycling rainwater can be very profitable, but also how GREEN doing so is. This type of design, construction and most importantly, mind-set, is the direction towards which we feel our industry MUST move.

The IPPCA annual World Wide Waterfall & Stream Competition is a photo contest in which contractor members send two photos (1 before photo and 1 after photo) for each of up to two different projects. The photos are judged by the INFO TANZA attendees and they choose the best of varying categories such as Best Overall, Best Waterfall, Best Stream, Best to Overcome Challenging Project Site amongst a few other categories.
This year the winners for the Most Natural Looking Waterfall category were:

Jay Bearfield, Liquid Landscape Designs: 1st Place
Freddie Combas, Florida Water Gardens: 2nd Place (Tie)
Joel Police, Fins and Flowers: 2nd Place (Tie)

Other Winning and Honorable Mention photos for 2008 and every past year can be seen at:
http://infotanza.com/WaterfallCompetition/WFCYear.htm

All INFO TANZA attendees were encouraged and invited to be part of the field trip to the 2008 Ponditat For Humanity Pond. Once a year the IPPCA selects a deserving person or group and with the help of contractors to provide the labor and manufacturer sponsors to provide the equipment and materials, the IPPCA donates the complete installation of a pond. Every year the event has grown in size and attendance with contractors paying their own way from all parts of the country to take part in this humanitarian event. In 2006 it was to renovate a problem pond for a handicapped man in Myrtle Beach, SC. In 2007 it was to aid an injured contractor finish a project for a handicapped client in Danville, IL. This year the Ponditat For Humanity Pond was awarded to the Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite Children’s Hospital in Atlanta, GA.

This year’s INFO TANZA attendees were able to participate in the release of Imported Koi into a formal dedication of the pond. This event was attended by several of the child patients of the Hospital, along with many Hospital staff and local supporters of the event and was covered by local Atlanta TV station WSB TV Channel 2. The Atlanta Koi Club, which greatly contributed to this years Ponditat For Humanity, was well represented at the dedication and made their own additional monetary donation to the hospital for the upkeep of the pond. To see photos of this and other Ponditat For Humanity events and for more information on how you can participate, make a donation or to become a sponsor, visit www.PonditatForHumanity.com.

After a full day of tradeshow, interspersed with round table networking meetings, INFO TANZA ’08 closed Saturday evening with its Annual Members Meeting, Annual Banquet and Awards Ceremony. One of the awards presented was the 5-STAR Contractor of the Year Award. The 5-STAR Contractor Program was implemented as both a tool for the IPPCA and for the IPPCA contractor. The IPPCA gets feedback from homeowners as to the performance by the IPPCA contractor before, during and after the sale and installation by rating the contractor in different areas. A rating of 1 star as being the lowest for Poor and a 5 star being the highest for Excellent. The contractor uses this information to address any possible weak area of his business as perceived by homeowners.

Last year the winner received a $1,000.00 check. This year Ewing Irrigation sponsored the 5-STAR Contractor Award. Clinton Elms of Ewing Irrigation presented Toby Ladd, the winner for 2008, not only a check for $1,000.00...Ewing Irrigation and Warren Thoma Associates also paid for his airfare and hotel accommodations too!

A lot of great information was received and shared, as well as all had a great time. For more information on next years INFO TANZA, Ponditat For Humanity and to become a Member or Sponsor, visit www.IPPCA.com or call 866-4U-IPPCA.
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In order to sustain customers, high expectations, Oly-Ola is very selective of the 100% recycled vinyl used in its paver restraints. Oly-Ola paver restraints are engineered with thick wall construction and specially designed “key-hole” cuts to make them strong, flexible, and durable.

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Available in either rigid or flexible sections, 15’ or 7½’ lengths (with a 90’ minimum order), Oly-Ola Paver Restraints are anchored by non-bending steel stakes that eliminate gapping, frost heave, contractor callbacks and hold professional landscape jobs secure.

Oly-Ola Edgings, is well known for unsurpassed customer service including their 15 Year 100% Plus Guarantee and Hassle Free Shipping policies. The industry-unique 15 Year 100% Plus Guarantee Policy includes labor, materials and freight costs on all products and their Hassle Free Shipping Policy expeditiously handles freight and shipping matters.

Founded in 1978, Oly-Ola, Edgings, Inc., headquartered in Villa Park, Illinois, USA, produces the most complete line of polyethylene/vinyl edging and paver restraints in the landscape industry. Products are sold exclusively through landscape distribution centers, landscape contractors, architects and independent nursery/garden centers. Oly-Ola stocks a large inventory to prevent backorders and assure prompt delivery. Oly-Ola has an international distributor network and supports many national and state landscape organizations.

For more information contact Oly-Ola Edgings, Inc.,
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e-mail: edgings@olyola.com website www.olyola.com
Mini Cascading Falls Kit

PondBuilder announces the addition of their Mini Cascading Falls Kit, or pond-less kit. This kit features everything you need to create a 3 foot long pond-less system for only $349!

Kit includes 10” Cascade Waterfall Box, Mini Pump Canyon, Small Matrix Box, 1800gph Pump, Flex Hose, Liner, Underliner, and complete instructions.

Customers who purchase this kit also receive a free installation video download! Packed in a four color box with UPC.

For additional information please call 866-921-3779 or online at www.pondbuilder.com.

Rainxchange™ System

Aquascape, Inc. Launches Revolutionary Rainxchange™ System

Ed Beaulieu, Chief Sustainability Officer for Aquascape, was instrumental in developing the prototype filter for the company's rainwater harvesting system. "Traditional methods of harvesting rainwater do not add beauty or value to a home or office setting. We've created a filtration system used in conjunction with a decorative water feature that captures, filters and houses rainwater run-off for future use," states Beaulieu. The system also reduces flooding, which is typical when heavy rains follow a period of drought.

Beta testing for the Rainxchange™ System was conducted in key areas across the country before being introduced to the market. The system debuted at both the Epcot® International Flower & Garden Show and at the Chicagoland Flower & Garden Show with an overwhelming response. The first residential system was installed and tested earlier this year by Aquascape and a team of Certified Aquascape Contractors (CAC) in drought-stricken Grantville, Georgia.

When used in conjunction with Aquascape's AquaBlox® Matrix, the Rainxchange™ System can earn up to 12 LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) credit points, making it an ideal residential and commercial application for managing stormwater in green building projects. The Rainxchange™ Specification Calculator makes it easy to estimate a properly sized system and Aquascape's technical services department is available to assist with projects as needed.

Adds Beaulieu, "We expect our rainwater harvest and filtration system to be a profitable entity that landscape architects and contractors can add to their existing service and product lines while offering environmental options for consumers to offset increasing water restrictions." The Aquascape Rainxchange™ System will be showcased this October at the ASLA (American Society of Landscape Architects) Expo in Philadelphia and the WaterSmart Innovations Conference in Las Vegas. In November the system will be displayed at the Irrigation Association show in California.

For more information on Aquascape's new Rainxchange™ System, log onto www.rainxchange.com. For information on Aquascape and its products and programs, visit www.aquascapeinc.com or call 1-866-877-6637 (US) or 866-766-3426 (CAN).
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Potency on the Label
If you carry AQUATIC LOGIC water treatment products, you can tell all your customers to look for the potency data on the label. If it's not there, tell them to walk on by because they have no idea what they're buying. We're resetting the bar high enough that soon everyone will have to disclose this information in order to compete. And we're just happy to be in position to lead the way instead of just saying, “me too.”

For More Info
For more information on AQUATIC LOGIC early buy options check out our website at www.aquaticlogic.com or call 877-90-PONDS (907-6637) Toll Free NOW!

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Catch the Wave...Atlantic Water Gardens; Mantua, Ohio is pleased to introduce our new Colorfalls Kit.

Designed to simplify hardscape installations, our Colorfalls Kit adds a breathtaking dimension to a water feature – waterfalls with shimmering details in white or blue hues – while combining all installation components needed in one convenient kit.

Atlantic’s Colorfalls Kit includes a 24 inch colorfalls (in white or blue), a new colorfalls basin, one TW2400 Tidalwave pump, 10 feet of 1” inch flexible PVC pipe in addition to all needed installation components (pump discharge, glue, cleaner, thread sealant and fittings). The new Colorfalls basin was designed as a one piece construction to offer exceptional strength. Plus, to further simplify installation, the 40 gallon capacity basin has a prefiltred pump chamber and built-in plumbing channels with filtering through a matala filter mat.

Enjoy the beauty of your water feature day or night with our new Colorfalls Kit!
American Koi Breeders Association
The American Koi Breeders Association is an American trade association of professional koi breeders. The purpose of this association is to promote the development of high quality koi production in America. United as a group, American breeders can benefit in many areas.

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Our mission is to visualize Nishikigoi appreciation and to promote the beauty of the Nishikigoi from the breeders standpoint. www.japan-nishikigoi.org

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International Waterlily & Water Gardening Society (IWGS)
The International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society promotes knowledge, leadership, and standards of excellence in water gardening and related aquatic plant areas. The IWGS is a non-profit organization of multinational membership dedicated to the furtherance of all aspects of water gardens and their associated plants. As an organization we support and promote education, research, and conservation in these areas.

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International Professional Pond Contractor’s Association (IPPCA)
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National Association of Pond Professionals (NAPP)
NAPP, (formerly PPA - Professional Pond Builders Association) is an organization for professionals involved in the pond and water feature industry. Their purpose is to secure the future of our industry for the common good of its members, the public and the environment.

NAPP is dedicated to the advancement and promotion of the pond and water feature industry through education, communication and cooperative partnerships.

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Shinkokai (All Japan Nishikigoi Promotion Association)
Shinkokai is the short name for the All Japan Nishikigoi Promotion Association - a group consisting of over 500 koi farms and dealers in Japan and from overseas. They hold shows and seminars in order to enlighten and to promote Nishikigoi in Japan and to the world. They also do research into koi health and husbandry, and have an advanced research facility. NPA members are regarded as professionals and they obtain koi keeping skills and discerning eyes for Nishikigoi.

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Upcoming Events

January 20–23
The 2009 International Builders’ Show & NextBuild
65th Annual Convention and Exposition, Las Vegas
Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV
www.buildershow.com

February 12–15
AKCA 28th Annual Seminar and
Koi Club of San Diego’s 22nd Annual Koi Show
Marriott – Mission Valley, San Diego, CA
www.koishow.org or www.akca.org

March 18–22
San Francisco Flower & Garden Show
San Mateo Event Center, San Mateo, CA
www.gardenshow.com

May 1-3
Maricopa County Home & Landscape Show
Arizona State Fairgrounds, Phoenix, AZ
www.maricopacountyhomeshows.com

May 5–7
National Hardware Show/Lawn and Garden World
Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV
www.nationalhardwareshow.com

June 16–June 19
National Lawn & Garden Show
Hyatt Regency, Atlanta, GA • www.nlgshow.com

August 30 – September 2
Pondapalooza
Following the Farwest Show - The Oregon Association of Nurseries Show. Sheraton Portland Airport Portland, OR
www.gardenpondpromotions.com

September 18 – 22
American Society of Landscape Architects
McCormick Place Lakeside Center, Chicago, IL
www.asla.org

Sept. 23-24 (tentative)
Garden Market Expo
Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. 800-748-6214 • www.gardenmarketeexpo.com

October 2–4
Koi America 2009
Held at Carroll County Agriculture Center in Westminster, Maryland with Koi, Goldfish, Vendors, and Speakers.
www.makc.com

November 16–18
Pool/Spa/Patio Expo
Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev.
www.poolsapatio.com

Have we missed someone?
If so, please let us know.
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<td>45</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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www.pondbizmag.com
We need to settle on a name for this industry. This may seem a strange proposition on the face of it, but consider this. If you watch CBS’s TV show Numbers, you know the star has a koi pond. If you watch Home and Garden Television (HGTV) you will hear the hosts talk about water features all day long. It seems every backyard makeover has to have a water feature. The term watergarden is what you see most when you go to the magazine rack at Home Depot, but if you complement a koi keeper on his beautiful watergarden, and it happens to be a pure koi pond, he might not be too pleased. In one legal battle, the term living water was thrown into the mix as well. Further, when we gather at trade shows held by other industries, what do they call us? We need to step up and tell them who we are, and to do that we need to agree on a name. It is simple as that.

So what should we call ourselves? I believe we are all members of the Garden Pond Industry. I feel this is a name that has no baggage, and describes what we are about clearly and concisely. I would ask each of you, as members of the various segments of this industry to consider this, and talk about it. To facilitate this discussion, I have set up a forum at www.pondbizmag.com/boards to address this topic. Please join in and tell us what you think. Even if you don’t want to expound, just a quick yay or nay would be helpful.

While this is not a monumental issue, I see it as the first step towards building dialog, and a sense of the common interests we share. Downstream I will challenge you with bigger questions. Hopefully this forum can provide a place for creative discussion, sharing and learning and help us all reach our true potential.

Please join us in this unifying effort.
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