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10 **Socrates Makes a Sales Call**
Dale Klamfoth
To jumpstart stalled sales, try employing a really old-school approach. What did the customer mean, what are they saying, are you listening, are you asking the right questions? The ancient Greek philosopher, Socrates, taught his students to ask a series of logical questions. Applied to a sales call, this strategy persuades prospects to open up, examine all the consequences of their positions and work with the salesperson to identify the proposal that will win the sale.

13 **Understanding Sanke**
Brady Brandwood
Learn about this beautiful three color koi variety, the Sanke, from a leading American breeder. This is a red, white and black koi - what should the red look like, where should the black be? Check out a tub of five koi to learn why one has better qualities than another, thus worth more $$$ for you.

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David Curtright
Are you wondering which plants to use and which to avoid? There are many elements that go into which plants to select. David goes in-depth on dozens of plants, with good pictures, so you can see what to use, what to avoid and why.

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Curt Nuenighoff
Do your water gardening and pond department displays, inspire your customers? Retailers and Contractors should understand that unlike other landscaping projects, pondkeeping reaches beyond the products on the shelf - it's really a lifestyle. There are a number of great tips in this article about displays and how to keep your customers coming back, again and again.

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10 Things You Can Do Today to Simplify Your Life - if some one said if you do these ten things your life would be better, wouldn’t you want to do them? One that we all can relate to is “Clean Your Desk.” Read this article and learn how to make your life simpler.

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Ben Plonski
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Eric Triplett
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Letter to the Editor

The Grid Veggie Filter, Jan/Feb 09 issue, Pg 12

1) JAMIE - Sooooo excited to read your plant filtering article in Pond Biz. I had simply planted a whole bog of plants (in dirt/mud as a side flow for my pond before coming back into it) and as everything has grown, and the roots have snarled together and everything competes for space - the dirt/root level has risen so high that the water is now leaking/flowing OVER the banks of the liner and I'm completely distressed - actually now cutting waterways through it so as to stop the disaster.

I'm going to try to follow your articles' recommendations. I need to find some plastic (I guess) grid material for a space about 7' x 9' and about 6' deep. I know that's little shallow but I could try to raise the banks up a tad...I know you talked about making something - at least a base to hold things down and/or so bricks/blocks for anchorage, but where could I get something large enough for my space...or at least most of it??

And I'm in Palm Springs where things sort of grow year round with very, very little frost...

Thanks, again...Gary

Response from Jamie - Thanks for the compliment on my article. The Grid is something that I have been playing with for maybe 15 years. Let me try to help you with your situation.

I get the grid material from Farm Tek (farmtek.com). They sell the stuff in 2' x 4' sheets and it is used as poultry grating. About $15 for a 2' x 4' piece. You can use bread trays - ones that have been discarded for whatever reason. I like black color for obvious reasons. I cut the poultry grating into the 1' x 2' sections.

The 1/2” 3 way PVC corners and 4 way corners I get from Aquatic Ecosystems. You do not have much for depth. However, 2 to 3” is enough with a decent water flow through the area.

As far as something that is large enough. Use several of The Grids. Use those stabilizer legs shown in the article – place clay fired bricks on top of those legs for anchorage.

You should get the idea for building them. You do not need to build them exactly like I do it – my design is something that I have come up with that works well for me. Your imagination is your only limiting factor.

Gary, keep me posted on how you do. I will be glad to assist you further if you need it.

Jamie
Jamie Beyer, beyersbog@aol.com

2) Hello Jamie, I read your article in the Pond Biz magazine most recent issue and I wanted to thank you for it. I am a retailer in the Pacific NW- Waterfall Pond Supply in Tacoma, WA. I have been in the watergarden and horticulture industry for over 10 years and I have a B.S. degree in Biology. I am working on a pond booklet for my customers that I hope to publish in the near future. I sell pond plants, fish and the Flowranger filter systems to homeowners and contractors. I try to use the natural approach whenever possible and I a huge fan of bog filter systems and I
As I ponder what to write in my third editor’s column, I can say now that POND BIZ Magazine is. Whew. Start up jitters are in the past, the web site is up, we are getting new subscribers every day, and advertiser support is strong and growing. As the song goes, “I think we’re gona make it.” Thank you must go out to those of you who have written articles, shared mail lists, and offered critical feedback when I needed it most. A huge thank you to the brave advertisers who bought advertising in a magazine that was in large part a vision, at the time. Without you we would not be publishing our third issue as POND BIZ Magazine today.

After the first issue was published in November of 2008, I received a flurry of congratulatory messages, which were very warming. In this issue, I am happy to include our first two letters to the editor, from readers commenting on the story by Jamie Buyer on the Veggie Filter in the Jan/Feb issue. While I selected only two letters to publish, Jamie’s article was the clear leader in the feedback I have received. I am heartened to hear feedback on the magazine’s content, positive or not, because that means it is being read and thought about. Feedback is universally positive, with just a few questions that Jamie answers in this issue. For that I can only say thank you.

It is our mission to provide you, our readers, a balanced mix of relevant content about our businesses and our lives, since, for most of us, where one ends and the other begins is a blurred line at best. I hope you find inspiration in this issue’s short article titled Socrates Makes a House Call. Some wisdom is timeless as you will see in this concept packed story. Eric Triplett takes us through the process of re-thinking how we approach and sell today’s Discerning Buyers. Yes there are still buyers out there, you just need to learn how to speak their language, and have the patience to work through all their questions.

Tetra has outdone themselves this issue with their article on profiling today’s buyer, giving you even more ammunition to close sales. Ben Plonski of Laguna Koi Ponds steps us through his system of stabilizing new koi for sale, in his in depth article, Preparing Koi for Sale, and Spike Cover introduces us to the new Best Health Practices program, that aims to certify koi dealers that have in place ideal quarantine facilities and procedures.

In the November issue I posed the question, who are we? What is the name of our industry? I proposed that the best name I have heard is the Garden Pond Industry. All the comments I received on our web board and through e-mail and phone conversations have agreed that we do need to rally around a defining name. The common reservation was that the name did not encompass fountains and pondless waterfalls. It seems to me that it is not too much of a reach for purveyors of those products to consider themselves included without specifically adding their products to the industry title. We don’t include air pumps or streams in the name either, but I think it is save to assume you will find those products in the Garden Pond Section of a show like the American Nurseryman’s Show. The question will answer itself in time, and I still welcome suggestions or comments on the subject.

Keep the faith, spend money on new products and advertising, pay your bills on time, and we will all grow together.

Tom Graham
Managing Editor
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To jumpstart stalled sales, try employing a really old-school approach

by Dale Klamfoth

Here’s a quick quiz. Can you spot what’s wrong in the following dialogue between two hypothetical sales professionals?

Salesperson: I saw the prospect who’s interested in the new equipment earlier today.

Sales Executive: How’d it go?

Salesperson: He told me the price is too high.

Sales Executive: What did you say?

Salesperson: Well, I told him the equipment’s rated highest in quality, we offer 24/7 service, we’ve got features nobody else has. I went through the whole presentation.

As you now doubt noticed, there’s something seriously askew here. The salesperson was twitching to get into the product’s benefits without bothering to ask what the customer meant by "the price is too high."

Are your own salespeople neglecting to ask the questions that move a sale forward?

Did the customer mean the price of the particular model being offered was too high? That the cost of maintenance would exceed the total budget? That recruiting and training an equipment operator would break the deal? That the company’s cash flow won’t allow a lump-sum payment? The salesperson didn’t know because he didn’t ask.

This leads to an obvious question: Are your own salespeople neglecting to ask the questions that move a sale forward? If they are, try telling them what Socrates would do on a sales call.

The ancient Greek philosopher taught his students to ask a series of logical questions that make the other person question his assumptions. Applied to a sales call, this strategy persuades prospects to open up, examine all the consequences of their positions and work with the salesperson to identify the proposal that will win the sale.

The process is called Socratic selling, and its bedrock principle is getting the customer to talk for 80% of the meeting. Admittedly, that’s a challenging goal for many salespeople. The few minutes with the customer that they worked so hard to schedule are precious, and they’ve got so much they want to say.

Socratic selling is getting the customer to talk for 80% of the meeting

They’re better off beginning by asking a question about what’s on the customer’s mind. By way of example: “Ms. Jones, I’m prepared to talk about _____, which we discussed on the phone. If you could give me your thoughts about that, we can focus the meeting on what interests you.”

Note the use of the word “thoughts” in this case, the alternates of which would be “outlook,” “ideas,” “viewpoint” and “perspective.” These are all mind words that encourage communication. They’re the opposite of gut words like “problems,” “concerns” and “needs,” which can trigger a response like, “I didn’t say I needed anything.” Note also that the opening question wasn’t something like “Tell me about your business.” Asking this could prompt a discussion about company history that’s unconnected to the business of the moment.

The aim here is to have the customer define the starting point for the dialogue that follows. Once the customer has done this, the salesperson keeps asking Socratic questions: “Tell me
more about;” “Give me an example of;” “What else should I know about;” “What else would help me get a better understanding of;” “Why.” That last example is of particular note; the word “why” may be the most powerful word in selling.

It’s particularly important to let the customer vent about a current supplier’s failures and not jump in with assurance that this time it’ll be better.

Questions like these will provide useful information and, better yet, help the customer think. The salesperson can support the thinking process by encouraging the customer to examine the implications of the pieces of information learned.

Some inexperienced salespeople don’t listen very carefully to what the customer’s saying because they’re concentrating on what they’ll say next. Others ask questions intended to show how smart they are. Yet others interrupt the flow of information by saying something like, “I know I read it in The Wall Street Journal.” And there are those who conclude their offering doesn’t meet the customer’s needs completely and try to minimize the importance of one or more of the customer’s specs.

There are salespeople who get impatient with the customer’s slowness in responding, unaware that the customer is still sizing up the salesperson. It’s particularly important to let the customer vent about a current supplier’s failures and not jump in with assurance that this time it’ll be better. Customers feeling pain about an unhappy supplier can be asked a question like: “How tough a position does this put you in?” The answer will help identify the customer’s personal motivators and demonstrate concern for them.

The salesperson must listen to the customer’s answers with ears and eyes as well, because body language can speak volumes.

The salesperson must listen to the customer’s answers with ears and eyes as well, because body language can speak volumes. To keep the dialogue productive, it’s important to assure the customer that the salesperson understands everything that was said. This can be done by playing back what was learned paraphrasing rather than parroting the information.

Socratic questioning can be especially productive toward the close of the sale.

It’s particularly important to play back understanding of the customer’s feelings.

If the purpose of a customer’s question isn’t clear, it’s useful for the salesperson to respond with a question of his own, like “I’m wondering, why do you ask that?” Doing so can prevent the sales call from derailing. For example, say a customer asks an employee training provider if the company customizes its training programs, and the salesperson answers, “Absolutely no two companies’ needs are alike. We adapt our programs to fit the situation.” Then suppose the customer replies, “I’m glad you told me that, because we want a program that’s been proven effective.” The salesperson never got a chance to say the company provides both custom and non-custom programs.

Socratic questioning can be especially productive toward the close of the sale. At this point the salesperson asks a series of “suppose” questions that are comfortable for the customer to answer, because they don’t push for a commitment. One such example: “If you were to go ahead with a maintenance program, when would you begin?” A key word here is “if,” which allows the customer to envision the start-up of a program without feeling pressured. Another is “you,” rather than “we,” which makes the customer the focus of the discussion instead of the seller. For the same reason, the company name isn’t cited.

With the Socratic method, the salesperson partners with the customer, using that power to benefit both parties.

Asking a question rather than making a statement is also useful when a customer makes a counteroffer that the salesperson must refuse. Rather than counter the counteroffer, the salesperson asks, “Would you like to discuss what I think might work?” Rarely does the customer turn down that suggestion.

Salespeople sometimes view selling as a game in which they try to overwhelm the customer’s superior power. With the Socratic method, the salesperson partners with the customer, using that power to benefit both parties. Some salespeople regard selling as an effort to “overcome objections.” But when the customer helps to create the proposal, there is no reason for objections.

About the Author:

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Understanding Sanke

by Brady Brandwood
Lotus Land Koi Farm
www.lotuslandkoifarm.com

The three colored koi the early Japanese breeders named ‘Sanke’ many years ago is a fascinating and difficult fish. Exceptional examples of this fish are hard to come by, and because of this can be quite expensive, when a good example comes along.

The Sanke is a white-based koi with a red (hi) pattern, and black accents enhancing this red pattern, adding balance and elegance. The Judging standards for Sanke request that a show worthy fish have a solid high quality hi plate, or red pattern, with an even coloration throughout the red patterning, and sharp edging separating red from white.
of the koi when viewed from above. That is ideal... and hard to come by. Generally though the sumi, or black patterning will fall in the red areas, which is fine, but regardless of where the sumi falls it should enhance the koi and add balance, rather than distract from the overall artistic look.

A Sanke whose colors are mature will also often have a single black stripe or two in the pectoral fins, and possibly a stripe or two in the tail fin. More than 2 stripes in a peck fin becomes busy and distracting, which if excessive can reduce the visual appeal, and in turn reduce the value of the Sanke.

The red patterning should ideally begin just below the eyes on the Sanke’s face, and end before the tail begins, leaving a white nose and a small patch, or ‘stop’ of white just before the tail.

The sumi, or black patterning on Sanke should add, accent, or compliment the red patterning, rather than distract from it. Ideally there should be no sumi or black on the Sanke’s face. The black patterning, generally small circles or patches of black, should begin on the shoulder and meander back toward the tail. Ideal sumi placement would be in the white areas on the Sanke’s back, filling in and adding balance to the overall ‘look’
exceptional koi can command very high prices. An exceptional Sanke is rare, and hard to come by.

Obviously a client has to understand what they’re buying to appreciate a given koi’s price. Some clients will be willing to purchase a ‘higher quality’ koi IF they can be shown what it is that makes the koi exceptional. With koi it’s often very subtle details that separate an exceptional show koi from an average pond grade koi. Add to this the fact that most all koi blossom as they mature, like a flower bud that shows us its true beauty only after it has matured. This is a large part of the mystique of koi, and what keeps so many of us fascinated with koi keeping. Here are a few photo examples of Sanke, with comparisons of the Retail Prices I as the breeder and seller would place on them.

The five Sanke in this bowl I are all the same age, 18 months old, around 16”, and all male. I would rate them all relatively close in retail value... about $600 each.

There are two Sanke in this group that I would rate higher, and place a slightly higher price tag on - the one in the center of the bowl, and the one just below it at 6 o’clock in the bowl. These two rate a little higher in overall quality, and future potential, based on the features and Judging standards we discussed earlier. You’ll notice that the colors are a little muted on these five Sanke, in particular the black. These are all still young, and still blossoming. One of the characteristics of a high quality koi is that they blossom slowly over a few years, rather than quickly.

Given this description of an ‘ideal’ Sanke, we can see why it’s so difficult to find exceptional examples. So many elements have to fall in the right places, and a lot of this is determined by luck of the draw, rather than genetic codes. A large part of what makes a koi ‘valuable’ is the rarity factor, or how unique it is, within the Judging standards, and since koi don’t breed so true, a breeder has very little control of the ratios of koi within a spawn that will meet the strict Judging standards. This is why there is such a wide range of prices for koi, and why a few very
These two Sanke both show good *sumi* placement, or placement of the black patterning from shoulder to tail, having the black primarily on the white, and adding balance and elegance to the overall look of the fish. The black stands out better on the white than on the red, and also when the black is on the red it has to fight with the red to show itself strongly. The placement of the black on these two Sanke to me is ideal, but is difficult to accomplish.

This young male Sanke is a great example of a flashy and attractive koi that sells well, and shows well also. The colors are bright and glossy, and the patterning, or layout of colors is attractive. I would place a value on this koi of around $400. The client will appreciate the beauty of this koi, and can see
what they’re getting. This type of young koi always sells well, and the price should be in line so that it is an all around crowd pleaser. Its day of beauty is today. Since koi are organic living pieces of art, and not ceramic pieces of art, we have to accept that they will not maintain their beauty forever. A flashy young koi like this one, will have a shorter window of beauty than a koi that is developing its coloration, or blossoming, more slowly. Longevity of beauty is value in koi; this should be reflected in the price also, in my opinion.

Higher-level females such as these two Sanke (pg.17 & 18) are desired by high-level koi collectors. Koi such as these generally start in the $2000 price range, and go up. The body shape is exceptional, they are capable of growing to over 30", and are able to maintain youthful vibrant
coloration and skin luster at that size. In photos it’s difficult to see what makes these large girls so outstanding, in person though they have a presence that draws the eye, and a quality that keeps us looking. These are the type of Sanke that our customers all dream of owning, which is why it’s nice to have a few of these around. They give your customers something to aspire to, or dream about.

About the Author

Brady Brandwood began Lotus Land Koi Farm in 1997, a 10 acre facility in Marshville, NC. He breeds Gosanke primarily, Kohaku, Showa, Sanke, but also produces Yamabuki Ogon, Chagoi, Kujaku, and Hariwake.

Brady has become one of the most respected Koi breeders outside of Japan, with an incredible list of Koi Show wins including Mature Champion, Adult Champion, Young Grand Champions, Baby Grand Champions, 22 Best In Size trophies, 14 Best In Variety trophies, several Best Male, Tategoi Awards, and other awards.

Brady breeds for quality, not volume sales, and specializes in the very best Show Koi, works of living art. Lotus Land Koi Farm is an isolated, biosecure facility, which doesn’t import Koi from other countries or other brokers or breeders.
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Cleaning ponds alone all day gives a person a lot of time to think about life in general, and ponds in particular. I find my mind wandering all over the place sometimes, and have to retrieve it as it gets lost in some corner of itself while thinking about some aspect of pond life and how it relates to the rest of the universe. I had such a moment recently as I worked on a client’s stream. The setting was perfect. It was late morning, I was alone in the yard, the stream sounded just right, and the water felt good on my feet as I went up the stream, removing overgrown plants and fallen leaves, and doing my best to eradicate a plant that I introduced to the pond a couple of years ago, wondering what had happened to my sixth sense of which plants to use and which to avoid.

The pond is made with a flexible liner, covered in stone. I planted it about 5 years ago, when it was new, and have taken care of it since then. There are two streams, each about 25’ long, which converge in a 6’ x 4’ pool, then down about 10’ more of stream and, finally, into the pond, which is about 8’ wide by 12’ long.

The streams have been planted with Iris fulva, Myosotis scorpioides, Ranunculus repens, Ranunculus flammula, Juncus effusus, and so forth. It has been charming as it has developed, and I have been able to move Ajuga, and Adiantum in as the...
substrate has developed between the stones, all of which gives the entire scene a sense of completely naturalistic randomness, which is important to me. Maintaining it has been a pleasure as I have kept the Bacopa monnieri out of the Anemopsis, and kept the Nasturtium aquaticum, and Echinodorus chordifolius offspring from clogging the stream. It changes with the seasons, and always has something to say to any visitor to the garden in which it sits.

The plant that I was, and have been, struggling to eradicate is Marsh Betony (Stachys palustris). When I acquired this plant, I read the tag on the pot and saw that it said, “fast growing.” I dismissed this as some sort of a marketing ploy, and bought the plant because of the photo of the flower. It produces a spectacular display of purple flowers that rivals those of many other plants. I molly-coddled it through that first winter, having acquired it in November, and made sure that I saved every little piece of it because I was sure that I could use it in my clients’ ponds. Spring came and the plant woke up, grew nicely, and looked pretty. Except for its rough texture, I could see nothing to complain about. The fact that it makes fast growing, heavily branched stolons did not faze me for some reason, and so I moved it to a couple of ponds, including the one described above.

**Before I could say, “Fast-growing my big toe!” it was out of control. It quickly became something like “The Blob,”**

I put the Stachys in one spot on the edge of the pool in which the two streams converge. The first year it did pretty well, giving no hint of the monster that it would become, and was attractive enough to elicit a complement from the homeowner. It went down with winter, as expected, and then came back this spring, seemingly on some sort of a mission to dominate the planet Earth. Before I could say, “Fast-growing my big toe!” it was out of control. It quickly became something like “The Blob,” getting into everything and swallowing any
living thing in its path. I have pulled masses of stolons out of folds in the liner, and from under the edge of the liner, from under rocks, and from the surrounding landscape. My plan is to manually eradicate as much of it as possible, then spot spray the rest with an herbicide. I cannot allow this weed to escape on my watch.

...keep in mind that we are introducing plants to our areas that are almost certainly weeds someplace.

All of which brings me to my original point: Which plants should we choose to use in our ponds? And, further, how should we think about their use in our ponds, and, perhaps most importantly, should some species be used at all? The existential questions arise, “What sort of gardener am I?” “Am I the type who will introduce anything, thinking only of what it will look like now, introducing it regardless of its cultural requirements, or the risk that it might pose to the local environment, or am I the type who wants to be more in tune with my environment, and keep only those things that will not overwhelm my yard or, worse, escape cultivation?” Naturally, most of us fall somewhere in the middle.

It is a brave soul here in Southern California that commits to the exclusive use of natives. This is because we suffer a paucity of water-tolerant plants here, being stuck with one or two species of cattails, several grasses or grass-like plants, *Anemopsis californicum, Echinochloa berteroi* (one of the least attractive member of the genus), a few species of *Cyperus*, and not much more. It gets very boring very quickly unless we allow exotic species into our collections, which most of us do with glee, since we can grow almost anything here.

Assuming that you have gotten past the existential issues, there are several things to consider when selecting plants to use, including: light exposure, water depth and chemistry, how it will look now and over time, and where it will best serve in one of the two main functions of water plants, they being water conditioning and aesthetics.

There is always a conflict within the hearts of water gardeners, between the desire to have a plant do well, and a need to have them not overwhelm us by their rapid growth. Many times over the years, I have heard people tell me that their pond was doing well, but that the Water Cress or the Parrot’s Feather tried to take over, so they ripped it all out and since then, wouldn’t you know it, the algae have taken over. It never occurred to them that if they merely prune the offending plant, that they can achieve a balance between what the pond needs to stay in balance and what they can tolerate as gardeners.

The use of so-called, “filtering plants,” which are those plants that expose roots to the water (Cress, Hyacinth, Lettuce, Parrot’s Feather, and so forth), is important in keeping water clean because of their role as adjuncts to biological filtration. We all know that beneficial bacteria convert decaying proteins to nitrate, and that plants use that nitrate for their growth, some consuming more than others for that purpose. What many people do not know is that the placement of the plants that we depend upon to filter the water is critical to their ability
Many plants that are otherwise considered to be “bog plants” can be used as filtering agents if they are allowed to overgrow their pots. Once a pickerel plant reaches the edge of its pot, and begins to produce roots into the water, it is just like a big hyacinth, greedily sucking nutrients out of the water. *Iris pseudacorus* can be used in this way, as well. We need to be mindful of what happens to their seeds, though, because they are very successful in most areas.

One way that I have used Hyacinth and other bog plants in what I call the “rock-filled wonder,” or “quarry” ponds, is to cover the stones on the first shelf with a variety of plants so that they do not grow a lot of algae. Left exposed to the sun, the rocks develop a layer of algae that is difficult to eradicate. Here is southern California, in ponds with black stones in very shallow water, and in the heat of summer, the stones develop a crusty, white layer of calcium from our...
hard water. Covering them with plants that produce a variety of leaf forms and flower colors is a great way to cover a lot of rocks, and to help the pond integrate more smoothly with the surrounding garden. Using Hyacinth in strategic areas, such as those that are well exposed to the sun in winter, can ensure a nice supply of them as early in the season as the plants will grow in the pond, which makes the pond owner less vulnerable to the vagaries of the local supply. In our area, if the plants are rooted in stones, instead of growing over open water, they will survive most winters pretty well.

When looking for plants for a difficult location, it is useful to think of how a stand of plants might develop naturally. As in the streams mentioned above, I use some species in young systems, not expecting to be able to grow some other plants until the pond has matured. In several instances, I have had large expanses of concrete to hide with plants. Fortunately, there are some species, such as almost any species of

Marselea  Lippia nodiflora  Ludwigia repens  Rotala rotundifolia  Myosotis scrophioides

Marselea, which can grow almost anywhere and on almost nothing. In the case of Marselea, the rhizomes are tough and wiry, and so, even in death, they make a good framework for debris to get caught, and for other plants to get a foothold in. First the Marselea, or Crassula helmsii, or Bacopa monnieri, or Lippia nodiflora can be planted. Each of these is virtually bullet-proof, and so can be used as primary plantings in difficult areas. Even large species such as Ludwigia repens or L. peploides, can be used in large areas. Once a substrate or framework of plant stems has developed, plants such as Rotala rotundifolia, Myosotis scorpioides, Acorus spp., Irises, Pontederia, Sagittaria spp., or any of a number of creeping or not-too-tall plants can begin to grow. Then, when it is a more solid, higher plants such as Hibiscus spp., Canna varieties, or Cyperus papyrus can be added to give it a fully-plant ed look that looks as though it has been there for all time. The entire process might take a few seasons to fully develop, but when it does, it is usually worth the wait.

Whichever species we select for our water gardens, we really do need to keep in mind that we are introducing plants to our areas that are almost certainly weeds someplace. We might say to ourselves as we consider a new plant or animal, “Gee, that ought to do well here,” and if we do, we need to remember to be careful with it. It is nice to have a thriving water garden, but we do need to be careful of what we use, and for our own purposes, clever about how we use those plants that we do use. ☁️

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Inspiration for Life-long Customers

by Curt Nuenighoff
TetraPond Director

As pond season begins, consider ways to re-create your water gardening and pond department that not only display products, but also inspire your customers. A number of factors are contributing to consumers spending more time at home, so they’ll be looking for ways to improve their home and garden environment, and water gardens do just that. Additionally, there are many advantages to owning a water garden including stress reduction and environmental benefits, not to mention it’s a project that can involve the entire family.

...about half of all pond owners wish they had made their pond anywhere from 25% larger to double its current size.

Consider this information before you begin creating a display to inspire:

• According to a market research study conducted by TetraPond, about half of all pond owners wish they had made their pond anywhere from 25% larger to double its current size.

• About one in four said they wish they had planned the project better; what to do, how to do it, what would work best.

• Many commented that had they known how enjoyable a pond would be, they would have built it sooner.

• Most respondents in this study (40%) stated that they became interested in pondkeeping through purposeful promotions such as retailers’ displays.
The Benefits of Water Gardening

Unlike other landscaping projects, pondkeeping reaches beyond the products on the shelf – it’s really a lifestyle. Pond owners take great pride in their ponds, but they also take refuge there too. The pond becomes an outdoor living space both for dining and recreation. With the right lighting and music, it is the perfect setting for an evening at home with family or friends. Additionally, consumers are finding that by investing in their home, they are providing an ‘escape’ without having to travel a mile. By understanding these benefits, you can guide your potential pondkeepers into lifelong customers!

Create an Inspirational Display

As mentioned above, many pond owners become interested in building a pond because of an in-store display, such as a live water garden. Even if it is in a container, the sights and sounds of moving water help the customer visualize and plan features for his or her own home.

Here are some ways you can dress up your pond/water gardening department and enhance the shopping experience for your patrons:

• Crafting a pond department requires a little imagination and a lot of professional help! If you are new to pondkeeping, it is a good idea to lean on your supplier’s shoulders. Ask your manufacturer to help you develop your pond department. Visually build your pond/water gardening department with existing, well-branded point of purchase materials and product packaging for an impressive, cohesive look.

• Most manufacturers offer displays, complete with well-merchandised, portable shelving stocked with an assortment of pre-packed products, to keep your department looking sharp. And remember to not overlook the power of informative packaging, which can also make a dramatic aisle or end-cap presence.

• It is also important to create a visual experience in your store for your pondkeeper customers. Use large, colorful posters and signage that capture the beauty and enjoyment of a pond.

• Consider where you place products. Keep consumables, such as fish food and water treatments, at eye level.

• Use how-to guides to show how easy it is to build a pond. Merchandise the department with attractive, instructional point-of-purchase materials that eliminate confusion on buying the “right” product.

Consider your Customers

Once you’ve inspired potential pondkeepers, they’ll become customers. As a supplier of pond products and consumables, you know that there is great deal of competition vying for their business. What sets you apart from them?

Start with understanding and educating yourself and your staff on pond products and how they work together. Ask your manufacturer to guide you in this process. Develop a keen understanding on foods- what and when to feed your pond fish. As the expert, your customers will keep coming back to you for advice.

Here are some additional tips to help you get to know your customers:

• Ask your customers to fill out a short informational card before they leave your store that you can keep on file. This can be as simple as a 3 x 5 card that asks for their address, email and phone number. On the back of the card you can document their purchase so you will be able to refer to it when they come back in to your store.

• Consider offering a monthly or quarterly email or printed one-page newsletter that gives tips on anything from maintaining healthy, happy fish to choosing the right plants for a balanced ecosystem. TetraPond offers a monthly email newsletter that you, as a retailer, can send to your customers directly from your email address, thus positioning yourself as a destination for water gardening supplies and advice.

For more information about the newsletter please email: jdlitz@theandersongrp.com.
Education = Loyalty

As the expert to your customers, providing educational tools will greatly enhance customer loyalty. Newsletters, take-away’s, brochures, books and magazines are all very important when building your pond department.

But don’t forget the obvious: product knowledge. If you and your staff don’t know how a filter works or how to choose the right pump for various sized ponds, your customers may find a retailer who can answer these questions quickly and understandably.

Ask your manufacturer partner to provide you with education and information on how their products work. If you are new to pondkeeping, you may not know all of the different food options available for your customers to purchase. Or, more importantly, the importance of not feeding pond fish when the temperature falls below 39°F, as it is very harmful and sometime fatal for fish.

Pondkeeping can be a profit center for your business and a means to gain loyal customers who’ll visit regularly for pond food, plants, water treatments, disease remedies and cures, and accessories – a steady stream of revenue. But don’t forget that getting to know your customers will better prepare you for making knowledgeable and proactive recommendations. And over time, they’ll build trust and credibility for your brand. Remember – inspire your customers as often as possible by recreating your display and store layout, giving them a reason to come back often.

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@teta.net

• Encourage customers to take snapshots of their ponds and water gardening creations and post the photos on an in-store bulletin board or feature them in your newsletters.

• Get to know your customers by talking with them. Ask them questions that are open ended and require more than a yes or no response such as: How much time do you want to spend building your pond? How big will it be? Do you envision fish in your pond? Why did you decide to build a pond? How do you want to landscape around your pond?

• Another way to add value to your customers’ experience is through a customer retention program. This type of program can include discounts, coupons, special product announcements and freebies.

• Offer to test customers’ pond water as a free service. 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.
It’s more than an addition to the garden. It’s an addition to the family.

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Simplifying can sometimes be overwhelming. The amount of stuff you have in your life and the amount of things you have to do can be too big a mountain to tackle.

But you don’t have to simplify it all at once. Do one thing at a time, and take small steps. You’ll get there, and have fun doing it.

In fact, you can do little but important things today to start living the simple life.

If you do these 10 things, you’ll have made great strides with little effort.

I was criticized a few weeks ago when I published the Simple Living Manifesto: 72 Ideas to Simplify Your Life, because many people felt the list was too long. I heard this point, and this post is my response: just the 10 most important things.

And these are not 10 difficult things, but 10 simple things that you can do today. Not tomorrow, not next week, not next month. Today. Choose one and do it today. Tomorrow, choose another.

If you do these 10 things, you’ll have made great strides with little effort.

1. Make a Short List

Take out a sheet of paper and fold it into a small square, perhaps 3x5 inches. Or take out an index card. Now make a short list of the 4-5 most important things in your life. What’s most important to you? What do you value most? What 4-5 things do you most want to do in your life? Simplifying starts with these priorities, as you are trying to make room in your life so you have more time for these things.

2. Drop 1 Commitment

Think about all the things in your life that you’re committed to doing, and try to find one that you dread doing. Something that takes up time but doesn’t give you much value. Perhaps you’re on a team, or coaching something, or on a board or committee, or whatever. Something that you do each day or week or month that you don’t really want to do. Now take action today to drop that commitment. Call someone, send an email, telling the appropriate person or people that you just don’t have the time. You will feel relief. I’d recommend dropping all commitments that don’t contribute to your short list (from Item #1), but for today, just drop 1 commitment.

3. Purge a Drawer

Or a shelf, or a countertop, or a corner of a room. Not an entire room or even an entire closet. Just one small area. You can use that small area as your base of simplicity, and then expand from there. Here’s how to purge:

1. Empty everything from the drawer or shelf or corner into a pile.
2. From this pile, pick out only the most important things, the stuff you use and love.
3. Get rid of the rest. Right now. Trash it, or put it in your car to give away or donate.
4. Put the stuff you love and use back, in a neat and orderly manner.

4. Set Limits

Read Haiku Productivity for more. Basically, you set limits for things you do regularly: email, RSS posts, tasks, feeds, items in your life, etc. And try to stick with the limits. Today, all you have to do is set limits for a few things in your life. Tomorrow, try to stick with them.

5. Simplify Your To-do List

Take a look at your to-do list. If it’s more than 10 items long, you can probably simplify it a bit. Try to find at least a few items that can be eliminated, delegated, automated, outsourced, or ignored. Shorten the list. This is a good habit to do once a week.
6. Free Up Time

Simplifying your life in general is a way to free up time to do the stuff you want to do. Unfortunately, it can be hard to find time to even think about how to simplify your life. If that's the case, free up at least 30 minutes a day for thinking about simplifying. Or alternatively, free up a weekend and think about it then. How can you free up 30 minutes a day? Just a few ideas: wake earlier, watch less TV, eat lunch at your desk, take a walk for lunch, disconnect from the Internet, do email only once today, shut off your phones, do 1 less thing each day.

7. Clear Your Desk

I can personally attest to the amazing feeling that a clean desk can give you. It's such a simple thing to do, and yet it does so much for you. If your desk is covered with papers and notes and gadgets and office supplies, you might not be able to get this done today. But here are the basic steps:

1. Clear everything off your desk and put it in a pile (either in your inbox or on the floor).
2. Process the pile from top to bottom, one item at a time. Do not defer decisions on any item — deal with them immediately and quickly.
3. For each item, either file it immediately, route it to someone else, trash it, or note it on your to-do list (and put it in an “action” folder). If it's a gadget or office supply, find a place for it in your desk drawers (or get rid of it).
4. Repeat until your pile is empty and your desk is clear. Be sure to get rid of any knick knacks. Your desk should have your computer, your inbox, perhaps a notepad, and maybe a family photo (but not many). Ahh, a clear desk!
5. From now on, put everything in your inbox, and at least once a day, process it in the same way as above.

8. Clear out your email inbox

This has the same psychological effect as a clear desk. Is your email inbox always full of read and unread messages? That's because you're delaying decisions on your emails. If you have 50, let's say, or fewer emails in your inbox, you can process them all today. If you have hundreds, you should put them in a temporary folder and get to them one chunk at a time (do 20 per day or something). Here's how you process your inbox to empty — including emails already in your inbox, and all future incoming emails: 1) process them top to bottom, one at a time, deciding and disposing of each one immediately. 2) Your choices are to delete, archive, respond immediately (and archive or delete), forward (and archive or delete), or mark it with a star (or something like that) and note it on your to-do list to respond to later (and archive). 3) Process each email like that until the inbox is empty. 4) Each time you check your email, process to empty. Ahh, an empty inbox!

9. Move Slower

We rush through the day, from one task to another, from one appointment to another, until we collapse on the couch, exhausted, at the end of the day. Instead, simplify your life by doing less (see Items 1, 4 and 5) and doing them more slowly. Eat slower, drive slower, walk slower, shower slower, work slower. Be more deliberate. Be present. This isn't something you're going to master today, but you can start practicing today.

10. Single-task

Instead of multi-tasking, do one thing at a time. Remove all distractions, resist any urge to check email or do some other habitual task like that while you're doing the task at hand. Stick to that one task, until you're done. It'll make a huge difference in both your stress level and your productivity.

If you liked this article, please bookmark it on del.icio.us or vote for it on Digg. I'd appreciate it. :)

Editor's Note: We found this article on a wonderful web site, http://zenhabits.net/. You will find a wealth of other great articles there. Be sure to sign up for their free newsletter as well. The site is copyright free, so you can use their articles to inspire your team and customers as well.
Creating and maintaining a reliable “new koi” health plan will pay great dividends in building your shop’s reputation, which is very important to the long term success of your business. Customers appreciate dealers who are serious about quarantining. They want to know what you do and how you do it.

The goal of quarantine is to build the strength of the fish and to prevent the spread of disease; for example, KHV (koi herpes virus). You will also occasionally have parasites and other little bacterial things on them that you will need to treat for. It is the stabilizing process and building/strengthening the koi’s immune systems that is the primary goal of quarantining your new koi. This is what will ultimately save the fish; stronger fish have a better chance to respond immunologically to the diseases they will inevitably face as they move into new environments. What you are doing is not only making sure you are not introducing new diseases or parasites into your shop and your customers’ ponds. You are also strengthening them to face the new bacteria and parasites they will face for the first time when they get into your customers’ ponds.

Getting Started

The first step is to establish a separate area to quarantine all new koi. Get started by setting up separate holding tanks - you can never have enough tanks as dealer. I estimate that you need as many tanks in the back to quarantine, as you have out front to hold koi for sale.

All In - All Out

All koi from new shipments need to be kept together and never mixed with any prior shipments of koi. Even though the customer will eventually mix his fish, you the dealer need to keep them separate, if not indefinitely, for as long as possible.

New fish arrive and go into the quarantine tanks, based on their size and quantity. If you over crowd you tanks, you will not have stable conditions, so quarantine tanks need to be big. When you set-up your quarantine area, be sure that you can make water changes easily. You will need to make small, frequent water changes easily.

When new fish comes in, they are stressed out and very weak. Put them in a quarantine tank that has 0.5 percent salt. Some may feel this is too high a percentage salt. This is what
my Japanese breeders recommend and we have been using this level (without plants) for almost 20 years with very good results. The koi should only stay in this level of salt for up to one month. During your quarantine period you should be slowly reducing the level with small water changes. Be sure the new koi stay in this level for at least one week. If the koi are weak or cold you may want to keep the level of salt at 0.5% for a full month.

The pH should be closely matched to the water that is in the bag that you are receiving the fish in. If you don’t know the pH, adjust the pH in the quarantine tank to 7.0. Fish in bags normally have a low pH: starting as low as 5.0. A neutral 7.0 pH will help reduce the shock to the fish as you take them out of the bags.

**Temperature Control is Vital to Success**

Most breeders/koi farms now medicate for parasites prior to shipping so the fish should be pretty clean when you receive them, but they are going to be stressed. Controlling the water temperature is an important (and maybe the quickest) way to help the fish recover from the stress of shipping.

You must have the ability to heat the water, to control and manipulate the temperature of the quarantine tank. The heat will help you build up the strength of your fish. The temperature of the quarantine tank should be the same as where they came from, so you need to ask your source what the local water temperature is when you place your order. Thus, if the koi farm you bought them from has a water temperature of 80°, then the water in your quarantine tank you receive them in should be at 80°, even if the temperature has dropped during shipment. The fish should be received at the same temperature that it was accustomed to prior to shipment. Floating the bags will bring the temperature up gradually before releasing them into the quarantine tank. Once the fish have gone through quarantine, which could be up to 4 weeks, you can slowly bring the fish’s temperature down to ambient temperature. No more than 2 degrees per day.

If the fish are coming from a lower temperature, receive them at that matching temperature, but then slowly bring them up to a temperature range that is better for the fish, around 75° - at no more than 5 degrees per day.

For the first couple of days, with your quarantine tanks at 0.5% salt, you should just let the fish rest and begin to regain strength. Cover the tanks with something like shade cloth to help reduce stress and prevent jumping. Do not feed them for the first two to three days. Then slowly introduce small amounts of small size food, to allow the fish’s system to start working again. The fish may act like they are starving and begging for food, but resist the temptation to over feed them for the first week. Go slowly to wean them back onto food. Be sure you are steadily increasing the amount of food. Feeding is also part of the strengthening process.

You need to keep the water quality high. You probably will want to test for ammonia and nitrates every two to three days. Make sure you have good aeration. You normally will not have to do anything to your biological filtration, but be sure to clean your pre-filter.

The first week is all about strengthening the fish and getting them back onto food. After about five to seven days, then you can start medicating with things like Malachite Green or Proform C together with Fluke tabs or Praziquantel. Two to three days later we give them a second dose of Malachite Green. Then after another three to four days we will treat them again with Malachite Green and Fluke tabs. You can use over the counter malachite green or make your own; either way your dosage should produce between 0.05ppm to 0.10 ppm. Actually malachite green is pretty safe and koi seem to be able to tolerate even higher doses. However, it is best to be scientific and use known quantities. We use “Fluke Tabs” for resistant flukes, fish lice and anchor worm but we wait one week between each treatment. This combination is safe together with salt at 0.5%. The Pro-Form C is a very good medicine but may be too harsh to use together with salt, so it would be best to reduce your salt level to 0.25% or less before using Proform C. Praziquantel is also good for flukes and crustaceans and the choice is up to you. The Salt however, is very therapeutic and should be maintained for at least the first week. Do not try to be in a rush, you will just damage your koi.

With the salt level at 0.5 and the above medication treatment you will cover most of the common fish ailments: Flukes, Fungus, Chilodinella, Fish Lice, Anchor Worm and Ich. This will not necessarily eradicate Costia and Trichodina. After the last dose of Malachite Green and Fluke tabs you can give a low dose treatment of Potassium Permanganate to help with Costia and Trichodina. Your salt level should be reduced...
to lower than 0.25% before using Potassium Permanganate. One dose at 2 to 3 ppm will help with Trichodina. Costia, however, might take multiple doses over a few days. Be careful with Potassium Permanganate. Too high a dose or too many multiple doses will dry out the mucous. Remember, you cannot sterilize a koi without killing it. These medicines do not completely eradicate parasites. Parasites are always part of the koi’s environment. The two bugs, costia and trichodina, are what I consider “commensal;” meaning they are always present on the koi in low levels. As long as the koi maintains his strength and water quality is excellent, you should not have big problems with low levels of these bugs. However, it does not take much for these bugs to explode under improper conditions. Diligence continuously is key.

So, the first week you normally are building the fish’s strength and getting them back on food, unless they are really sick. The second week you are medicating. The above medication treatment is what we have found works, but there are many medications out there that will work and you may want to try different things and see what works for you.

At the end of the second week, you should do some scrapings and examine them under your microscope. You must have a microscope to really know what is going on with your koi. Do at least three or four fish, to make sure there is no longer any thing going on with them. Try to look at the fish and pick one that looks weak and/or stands off from the crowd. If you don’t find anything they may be ready for sell. Editor’s Note: If you have never done scrapings of koi, it is a good idea to attend a koi health lab and get hands on training. Labs are held across the country by a number of vets, dealers, associations and universities. Watch our upcoming events area at pondbizmag.com.

This regime addresses pretty much everything except KHV.

Dealing with the KHV Threat

Can you trust your source of koi? Should you trust your source? At this point you should take it to the next level, by testing for KHV. You will need to draw blood samples, preferable with the help of a local vet, and send them to the lab to be tested. Once you send in the samples it will take at least another week to get the results back from the lab. Each sample does cost to be tested, but try to do as many as you can.

U.C. Davis does have a new test for KHV. It is a more sensitive (and validated) test for KHV antibodies. Some believe results from a “sampling” may not be enough; that you need to test almost every fish. (Editors note: On pondbizmag.com is an article further explaining sampling procedures.)

This is also why you need to keep the quarantine water temperature around 75°F. If you have had them in quarantine for three weeks at the 70°F to 75°F temperature (or two weeks at 75°F to 80°F), the fish should break out with KHV if they have it. If they have not broken out and you combine that with a negative test result, you can feel pretty confident about the whole batch. You also need to be able to trust your source. There still could be a carrier, which is why the antibody testing (above) is recommended.

Here you are now at three weeks. Your customers want to buy your fish. You are now either loosing money or you are building your reputation. It is all in how you look at it – your perspective. Which is most important to you?

Getting ready to sell the fish, you will now (in most cases) have to start lowering the temperature of the quarantine tanks. What is the average temperature of your customer’s ponds? What is the ambient temperature in your region? That is the temperature you want to achieve before that fish leaves your shop. This may take as much as another week. You can only lower the temperature a few degrees a day.

Quarantine protocols can take as much as a month, before you are ready to sell your fish. A fair quarantine can take three weeks
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Quarantine Facility at Moorehaven Water Gardens

and a minimal quarantine should take two weeks. Part of this is also dependent on the temperature of the water in your area. If this is during the summer, when water temperatures are high you don’t have to drop the water temperature and thus it doesn’t take as long.

When you have your koi on display for sale they continue to stabilize. The koi is re-gaining its strength from the stresses of being shipped and quarantined. As the koi gains strength it will become better able to adapt to its new environment (another set of circumstances), i.e. your customer’s pond and mixing in with other fish in that pond. So really the whole time you have a fish in your shop it is in quarantine.

Remember you still don’t want to mix your older fish in your establishment, with your newer fish. Keep them separate, in separate tanks even when they are for sale.

If you have had some fish for two or three months and the weather is warm, you could then start to mix some of your older fish together to make room, since you have had them for a while and they have shown that they are stable. Everything really comes down to temperature. (That is the main secret.) If they are in subdued immunological water temperature, say less then 65°F; then do not mix fish. If you do you will increase your risk for trouble.

If you do get to a point where you combine older fish, bring the salt level in the water back up to 0.5% salt. Only leave them in that salt for to three or four weeks.

The Hardware You Will Need

Your isolation tanks must be a minimum of 250 gallons and up to 1,000 gallons in size. The 6’ and 8’ round show tanks can also work and are more affordable than some other options. Be sure to cover the tanks, so the fish won’t jump out.

You should have two sources of aeration – one is an air pump for the bubbles, with a diffuser – the second is the splashing water coming back from your bio-filtration. If one source should happen to stop working you will still have aeration from the second source.

The filter should be as large as possible to handle the incoming fish load. This is one area that is often built too small. It is important to have a large amount of filtration. We shoot for filtration that is 10% the volume of the quarantine tank. For example, a 1,000 gallon quarantine tank would have a minimum of a 100 gallon filter. Two 55 gallon barrel filters with Matala filter media is what I use on many of my tanks, but there are many filter systems that will work, as long as they are large enough. We use the Matala BioSteps filter with 18 watt UV on some of our smaller quarantine tanks. We also use 40 watt UV on some of our larger systems to keep water clear. A big UV on a small quarantine pond will give the added benefit of reducing the bacterial count in the water. Obviously with any filtration system you must also maintain the filtration system properly to provide a stable environment for the koi.

Good flow through the filter is the other important variable. We have found that two tank turnovers per hour is best.

While you are at it, don’t forget to have a separate set of nets and tubs to use in your quarantine facility. Sanitize the nets and tubs regularly with a solution of chlorine which is what we use. There are other sanitizers but chlorine has worked for us. We have a tank set up which we can dip all our tubs or nets into. Make sure all your employees understand the rules, and wash their hands whenever they leave the quarantine area.

Remember, you are protecting your investment in not just the rest of the koi in your facility, but the koi in your customers’ ponds, and ultimately, your reputation as a professional koi dealer. Employing a good koi health regimen will give you the pride and confidence that you are selling the healthiest koi possible. It is definitely worth the effort. 🌟
Profiling

Today’s Discerning Buyer

by Eric Triplett
The Pond Digger®

It doesn’t take a major market analysis to realize it’s harder to separate the typical POND BUYER from their money than in years past, wouldn’t you agree? The real question is: Have you taken the time to evaluate today’s pond buyer and more importantly identify their buying behaviors? Today’s typical Pond Buyer has changed.

IMPULSE Buyers are in hibernation

Once you distinguish these buying behaviors it is important that you "EVOLVE" your sales approach to communicate with this specific buyer because believe it or not there is a trend here! This is incredibly difficult to do until you identify exactly who the buyer is.

Think about this. For the last decade we’ve been selling ponds, pond construction supplies, disappearing waterfalls, pond this and pond that primarily to IMPULSE BUYERS! It’s really simple and I hate to break it to you but just about anyone with a nice looking product and a pulse can sell to an Impulse Buyer! It’s not that hard to do! During the last five years, the Impulse Buyer has been around in mass.

However, today the majority of IMPULSE Buyers are in hibernation, waiting for the economy to allow them to shop again. Now I say this with all due respect! Don’t get upset if you fall into this description. I’m absolutely guilty myself of buying

A Discerning Buyer is not quite as easy to sell as the Impulse Buyer.

on impulse myself on more than ten occasions! Ask my office manager or wife, they’ll both tell you! No, I take that back. Don’t ask my office manager!

Let me get back to the point and help you profile who I believe today’s primary pond buyer is. Let’s call them – the DISCERNING Buyer. A Discerning Buyer is not quite as easy to sell as the Impulse Buyer. If you are struggling to sell a pond in today’s market there is a strong possibility your sales approach is tailored towards the Impulse Buyer! For example, do you tout about how fast you can build their pond? How fast you can build a pond is an extremely effective sales approach on an Impulse Buyer, but NOT a Discerning Buyer! Do you feel me?

The Discerning Buyer will not fall for the typical sales techniques used to sell the Impulse Buyer. The Impulse Buyer will be ready to “ink the deal” on a construction contract or walk out your store with equipment to build their own pond, way before small details are finalized. You can work those details out when you’re on the job or the do-it-yourself impulse buyer will just come back to the store with installation questions once they break ground, right?

The Discerning Buyer on the other hand will hold ground until they have a firm grip on every single, minute detail. In fact the Discerning Buyer will 9 times out of 10 need several meetings with you before they are ready to commit.

Money is usually not the “OBJECT” for the Discerning Buyer; VALUE is!

The Discerning Buyer wants more information, proof of insurance, and more time to make a decision. The Discerning Buyer wants to understand technology options, warranty comparisons, need more explanation, more options, and more references while seeking out the most VALUE!

Money is usually not the “OBJECT” for the Discerning Buyer; VALUE is! The Discerning Buyer is smart and does research before purchasing. That research is done on the Internet. The Discerning Buyer is the consumer that has the money, resources or just packs their lunch everyday and brews their own coffee instead of going to Starbucks in order to save up enough money to get exactly what they want! Discerning Buyers can write you a check or pay you cash and more likely pull the money from under a mattress!

Repetition is the Mother of skill so let me remind you, The Discerning Shopper is wise, often frugal, and cautious, not necessarily RICH. They buy on VALUE, not impulse. The Impulse Shopper does not care about monthly expense and just wants a waterfall and koi pond bigger and better than the Jones!
The Discerning Buyer wants to know how much it will cost to run that waterfall annually and what pump options are available to save on his electric bill. Discerning buyers don’t buy vehicles based on a monthly payment. They don’t make foolish buying decisions based on emotions. They buy on (Say it with me) "VALUE"!

Do you see where I’m coming from? I know you see this happening in your market place but have you truly identified this and adapted to it, instead of complaining about it? Just what the heck are you doing about it besides blaming the economy and the President of the United States?

Most Impulse Buyers are limited to only spending money on pond supplies right now but only on the bare necessities! There is good news; the Discerning Buyer is still spending PLENTY of money on new pond construction, pond upgrades & pond supplies! Figure out the Discerning Buyer, adapt your approach and you will see your closure rate percentage on consultations jump & your overall sales will increase.

Discerning Buyer Habits

Here are five important habits of the Discerning Buyer you will need to recognize and understand in order to communicate with them effectively.

1. The Discerning Buyer RESEARCHES their purchases on the Internet.
2. The Discerning Buyer will have a lot of QUESTIONS.
3. The Discerning Buyer is incredibly PATIENT.
4. The Discerning Buyer is a THINKER.
5. The Discerning Buyer will likely get MULTIPLE BIDS.

Tips to Sell the Discerning Buyer

Once you recognize and understand the behaviors and habits of the Discerning Buyer it is imperative that you modify your sales approach and tailor to their needs to restore your sales and consultation closing rates. Here are five things you MUST do in order to sell the Discerning Buyer.

Research!

Yeah you! Research! The Discerning Buyer is researching so I suggest you do the same. You think you know enough about ponds already that you don’t need to learn more? I guarantee you will lose the Discerning Buyer if they want to talk to you about say “bottom drains” for instance and you can’t carry on a quality conversation about them. There is constantly new technology and new experiences being tossed into the scene, so stay on top of it and be proactive! From new aquatic plants to settlement tanks, Sieve Filters to UV flow rates, External pond pumps vs. Submersible pumps, water treatments and fish foods, fish grow out contests, gravity fed bottom drains and the list goes on and on!

Ask Questions!

This is HUGE. When you ask quality questions to the Discerning Buyer about their plans, goals, and expectations of their water feature it goes over really, really big. This gives them the sense you understand their need to be “In the know” and they need to be comfortable asking questions. It’s very likely the last person they spoke to about their project was short with them because they asked so many questions!

The Discerning Shopper is wise, often frugal, and cautious, not necessarily RICH. They buy on VALUE, not impulse.
Be Patient!

If you have closed a lot of deals selling ponds in the past you likely HAD things down to a science. The Discerning Buyer is extremely PATIENT, so closing the deal will take longer than in your past successes, sometimes over the course of several visits. Don’t be impatient and come to the conclusion that the Discerning Buyer is a tire kicker and wasting your time! They WILL buy, but you have to understand they do not rush into things like the Impulse Buyers you are accustomed to. It’s okay; don’t be too hard on yourself, now you know!

Think!

Give thought to what your sales approach is, or was, and make some adaptations to communicate effectively with the Discerning Buyer. They want VALUE and won’t fall for the LIFESTYLE sales approach! Think it over and figure out how to give them value in monthly savings on electrical, easy maintenance procedures, and other services that you may offer.

Give Multiple Bids!

Back when I was cool I would roll into a sales consultation and go off my gut, reading into the buyer just how much they budgeted towards their new water feature. I’d spend some time with them (Impulse Buyer that is) walk the yard and on the same visit then give them ONE solid bid in less than an hour! Not anymore! I give on average three bids and three different technologies to every buyer in today’s market. I figure they’ll want three bids, so why not give ‘em three bids!

I hope you’re up for the challenge! You can’t just sit back with your current sales strategy and wait for the Impulse Buyer to be bailed out! You need to adapt and evolve like you have been built to do! I took on the challenge of figuring out the Rubik’s Cube with my nine-year-old son over the Christmas break and had a blast doing it! Trust me when I say; The Discerning Buyer is way easier to figure out! Educate them, listen to them, inspire them and win the Discerning Buyer over.

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**About the Author**

**Eric Triplett** owns and operates The Pond Digger, Waterscape Design and Construction Company, based in Redlands, California. The Pond Digger specializes in ‘Touching Peoples Lives With Water’ with ecologically friendly, low-maintenance, waterscapes for fish and aquatic plants, but more importantly, for people!

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Signage is Your Silent Salesman

by Kelly Billings
Maryland Aquatics

Everyone knows that signs in any place of business convey messages of importance. They silently direct customers to the entrance, to departments of interest, as well as, to restrooms and checkout counters. They are the foundation of any establishment.

To begin with, the entrance should be clearly marked, inviting and appeal to the senses.

To begin with, the entrance should be clearly marked, inviting and appeal to the senses. It is the first impression your customers will have. Brightly colored signs that mark the entrance and various departments should be clear and legible with bold text that is visible from a distance of 30-50 feet.
in or around the display pool area indicating the beautiful lilies are the result of your message. Make certain display plants always look their best and never offer them for sale. They are an invaluable sales tool when properly signed. A similar sign could offer a lily potting service for those willing to pay a fee for someone to do it for them. (See the Custom Container Potting Banner that could be modified to include inspiring water lily photos in place of the pottery.)

...signage is a powerful tool for marketing and tie in sales.

Often time’s signage can capitalize on missed opportunities. A garden center that has sold more Floating Islands than any of our other customers found that marketing the Islands in the water garden department limited the potential purchases of non-pond owners. Consumers were instantly

Undersized, ragged or poor quality signage is a missed opportunity for customers to quickly discern what and where you may have the products they are looking for. Your goal should be to separate yourself from the competition and make the shopping experience as pleasant as possible. For larger garden centers, consider a color-coded directory at the main entrance that coincides with department signs.

In addition to offering direction, signage is a powerful tool for marketing and tie in sales. A stack of 16 x 7 containers, aquatic planting soil and fertilizer will move more quickly if placed in the water lily sales area. A sign with the message “Big pots + food = happier plants!” The same sign should be placed
Pot Drilling
$25
Includes ¾” Bulkhead
(For large pots, include a standpipe)

Rock Drilling
If customer chooses an undrilled rock, add $25 to the cost of the rock. All pre-drilled rocks are priced or are $150

If you offer special services, let your customers know.

With every model out on display, a customer gets a sense that they must be able to find what they need here, and can see why a more expensive model is worth the extra cost.

Rather than just having the box sitting on a shelf, here you see the pump opened up for inspection, and the gallons per hour, model number and price all on the shelf tag. This allows the customer to browse and get an overview without needing a salesperson's assistance.
Often time’s signage can capitalize on missed opportunities.

turned off by the fact that they did not have a pond therefor they could not own an Island Planter. The store removed them from the water garden department and began displaying them in the annual and perennial departments floating in decorative pottery and plastic containers that held water. The signs in each simply stated “I water myself.” It was the ultimate self-watering container garden sale. Consumers who had ponds instantly recognized the potential for the backyard pond, but the store recognized the additional sales of plants, pots, GroMix and Islands to the non-pond owning consumer. A separate display area could be set up with an assortment of known successful Island plants from all departments. Customers can then pick and choose their own combinations. Care and information sheets should also be readily available to expand on the details conveyed in the original message when necessary.

Individual plant labels should be offered for every plant. Information should include only basic care information and enough descriptive text to entice the customer into making the purchase. Tags with photographs are the preference since they allow customers to see blooms or interesting foliage when the plants are not in their peak season. If picture tags are not available a stick tag should be offered. Make sure all information is accurate and spelled correctly. Pricing information should always be uniformly displayed. It is one of the most frustrating experiences for shoppers to have to inquire about cost. It also ties up the employee who has to answer the question. Some companies grow some of their own plant material. Boost consumer interest by labeling those plants as “Home Grown” or “Grown By.”
It is best to have only one person or one marketing company in charge of signage for the entire store. Allowing multiple parties to be responsible for generating signs can run into some creative overlap. Visual appeal and uniformity are critical. Choose someone that can stick to the

Visual appeal and uniformity are critical.

program. A mish mash of different shapes, styles and sizes will only confuse consumers. For messages to be effective they need to be clear, short and to the point. They should also be inspirational or appeal to the emotions of the purchaser.

Sunrise Marketing publishes a catalog called - The Idea Book. It is, as they call it, a book of great ideas on how to sell more stuff. They have an image file that exceeds 1500 exciting and professional images (water gardening included). Individual images can be downloaded at very reasonable rates for companies seeking supplements to

When determining a budget for signage keep in mind that your silent salesmen will generate revenue in a number of ways and provide your company an opportunity to rise to the next level.

affordable custom banners, posters, floor graphics and sign holders is just the tip of the iceberg. They have both the products and services that allow a small to medium sized business to operate in high-end fashion.

Tom Smith from Four Star Greenhouse in Carleton, Michigan was quoted in Green Profit Magazine as saying, “Don’t trip over dollar bills while chasing nickels.” When determining a budget for signage keep in mind that your silent salesmen will generate revenue in a number of ways and provide your company an opportunity to rise to the next level.
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Koi herpesvirus (KHV) probably appeared in Europe in the mid 1990s. However, mass mortalities in Israel in May of 1998 and later in the US brought the disease world-wide attention. Since then it has spread to virtually every country in the world where koi and carp are raised, except Australia.

In 2004 and in response to this growing threat, the AKCA formed Project KHV (the “Project”). Its mission was to solicit charitable contributions to help foster short-term control and long-term eradication of the disease. The best hope for long-term eradication seemed to lie with a vaccine. However it soon became apparent that the amount of money required to effectively bring a vaccine to market was well beyond the capabilities of Project KHV. That, combined with the fact that at least six other and better-funded groups were already pursuing vaccines, lead Project KHV’s Steering Committee (the “Committee”) to switch its focus to other important, but much less well-funded, aspects of KHV, specifically KHV education and research aimed at better understanding the virus.

Within AKCA and from as far back as 2002, the concept of a Dealer Certification program was contemplated. The idea took multiple forms and experienced several false starts over the years. It eventually evolved into an official undertaking for Project KHV and in March of 2006 the Project issued an RFP (request for proposal) for a Koi Dealer Certification program. In response to the RFP, the Project received two proposals. Unfortunately both proposals seemed seriously flawed. In an effort to determine if the Committee’s anxieties about one of the proposal were well founded, a market research project was undertaken. That market research confirmed the Committee’s suspicions about the program’s needs and this lead to a rewrite and re-issuance of the RFP. However and unfortunately, accommodation with the leading proposal group was not possible and they withdrew their proposal. And, it became apparent that obtaining other proposals was unlikely.

Instead of further delaying the project, Project KHV assumed both the sponsorship and management of the project and organized a skilled group of animal health professionals to draft the design and write a Koi Dealer Best Health Practices Certification Program (“BHP”) document.

Today, there is a clear idea of what the BHP program will be and it remains essentially unchanged from the description that was used to describe the BHP program in the market research:

The project under consideration is one where a team of well qualified veterinarians and other professionals will develop a program under which dealerships may be certified to be operating under best health practices as they relate to koi herpesvirus. Facilities will only be certified by licensed veterinarians who will function as competent, independent third-party inspection authorities. Those veterinarians are also anticipated to assist the dealers in configuring their facilities and establishing the necessary procedures that will allow the veterinarian to certify the facility as compliant with the program’s requirements. The certifying veterinarians will receive regular reports from the dealers and will perform on-site inspections sufficient to judge the suitability of continued certification.

The market research surveyed 53 koi dealerships (“Dealers”) and 21 veterinarians (“Vets”) that include fish in their practice. The research found that 75% of the dealers and all vets surveyed indicated they liked and were willing to support the proposed program. The specific likes, dislikes and suggestions for improvements from both Dealers and Vets were also noted and used to provide guidance for the current BHP authors.

Currently the authors have completed the six core sections, the Essential Requirements. Additionally, a legal review of critical documents has been completed by a well qualified, dual
degreed veterinary lawyer who teaches veterinary law at over 17 veterinary colleges. A prototype online course for veterinarians seeking to become Certifying Vets was completed and tested with a group of 10 veterinarians.

The BHP is currently finishing a phase where the as-written Essential Requirements were “reality challenged” by eight Vets pursuing implementation at a dozen Dealers throughout the country.

Anticipated dates for the major milestones remaining in the Program are:
Completion of Beta testing – January 2008
National release of the BHP program – Second quarter of 2009
Project KHV’s complete withdrawal from the Program – Early 2011

The following steps are planned to achieve these goals:
- Revise BHP documents as suggested by the “reality testing” feedback
- Revise online vet training course
- Plan, sponsor and implement an initial marketing campaign – web site included
- Establish self-sustaining mechanisms for Program including self-regulation and conflict resolution
- Offer materials free of charge to any vets who agree to certify only dealers that comply with the BHP Essential Requirements
- Build a successful history with the Program
- Solicit endorsements from relevant organizations, e.g. AVMA, IAAAM

Project KHV’s ultimate goal is to have the BHP successfully implemented nation-wide in a manner that is self-regulating and self-sustaining. Provisions for updates and revisions are expected to be built-in to the self-sustaining aspects of the program.

We believe that this Program will be the basis for participating Dealers to be well positioned to deliver cleaner, healthier fish to hobbyists. Since hobbyists will have no difficulty seeing the benefits of this, it is expected that hobbyists will encourage their Dealers to participate.

For more information, see: www.akcaprojectkhv.org

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**About the Author**

**Spike Cover** is a mechanical engineer by education and training but, by his own admission, he is a life long “fish geek” who is self-taught in koi health. He is currently the Director of both the AKCA’s Koi Health Advisor program and Project KHV. He may be reached in Southern California at 949-855-2371 (9a.m. to 9p.m.) or by e-mail at scover1@cox.net.
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Rain Water Harvesting

A Green Add-On Business to Consider

by Mike Garcia

If as a child, you remember when Elvis was cool and TV only came in black and white, you may remember rain barrels at the side of the house. They were used to irrigate herb gardens and flower gardens during the summer months. Then along came municipal water agencies and cheap irrigation systems and the need for rain barrels became obsolete. Or so we thought.

Today with the demand on municipal water agencies at historic peaks and drought conditions all over the country the thought of capturing winter rains for use during the summer has brought a new appreciation for rain barrels, or as their big brothers are known, cisterns.

A company in Soquel, California, Rain Source Water (www.rainsourcwater.com) has even improved on the standard above ground water tank by offering an underground solution. By constructing these cisterns underground the homeowner saves valuable space for planting and also hides what normally would be an eyesore that needs to be screened.

I recently talked to Bruce Arthur, Rain Source Waters Manager of Environmental Education and he explained the genesis behind the company's formation. Rain Source Water is a division of Pondsaway, Inc., a distributor of pond building equipment. Bruce had been studying urban runoff pollution and the related stormwater management practices that can improve the situation. He realized that the detention ponds and cisterns that the regulatory agencies were requiring were just utilitarian water features.

Pondsaway already warehoused the entire product used to construct the cisterns. The main component of the cisterns is the plastic "matrix box." An Australian company, Atlantis Corp, produces the matrix boxes. They are large Lego type boxes that simply snap together from flat panels. They are made from 85% recycled polypropylene battery casings. Designed strong enough to hold traffic loads when installed with the proper engineering techniques. In other words you could install them under your driveway or even a parking lot. Each matrix
box is 27” long by 16” wide by 18” tall. They are stackable and can be assembled into any shape necessary to conform to the contours of the area to be used.

Bruce proceeded to install a prototype in his own backyard. He dug a hole 7’ by 7’ by 3’ in depth and lined it with rubber liner. He installed the rain boxes inside the rubber liner, pulled the liner up over the top and covered the installation with dirt. By placing an access box on the top before covering it with dirt he had access to the cistern and an opening to install a pump to power his drip irrigation system.

By a simple calculation he determined his garage (which was the catchment area for his cistern) would capture 431-gal for every inch of rain that fell. Garage rain catchment calculation: (Length times Width times .625 equals amount in gallons for every inch of rain). His cistern would hold 1,152-gal, so it would only take 3” of rain to fill it.

Kirk Samis, the owner of Pondsaway, had an epiphany while Bruce was trying to spec a pump for the irrigation, he showed up one Saturday with a little 50watt fountain pump that produced 1,000 gph in flow, 100’ of drip irrigation line and 100-2 gph emitters. They put the pump in Bruce’s pond stretched out the line installed the emitters and plugged it in. Well what do you know each and every emitter produce 2 gph and the one at 100’ was even raised 6’ in the air and still produced flow. So the energy consumed to run the irrigation system only costs as much as running a 50watt light bulb.

The last task was plumbing an overflow that exited into a rain garden, which percolated the excess water back into the ground. The result was water much richer in nutrients without the salts and chorine of municipal water. His garden is happier and healthier that it has ever been.

Oh! By the way, the local water district offers a rebate for rainwater catchment, $25.00 for every 100-gal. not to
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exceed $750.00. Bruce received a credit of $288.00. Many other districts are already offering or planning to offer a comparable credit so it is definitely worth your while to investigate this in your own water district.

The water garden industry is in a bit of turmoil with the announcement that the EPA has taken the stance that water features wastewater shouldn’t be considered in their WaterSense program. If you think about it you could use the cistern water in conjunction with a water feature and kill two birds with one stone. Using rain water for the makeup water in your feature is better for the fish (no chlorine or chloramines) hence no need to dechlorinate before adding fish. It also has even more beneficial nutrients mixed in as the fish and other critters interact with the water.

One of the biggest concerns is the initial cost of the system. The product runs about $1.50 to $1.75 a gallon, not including the installation. With the price of municipal water still at very low rates it’s hard for some customers to justify the expense. All you have to do lately is pick up a newspaper or watch the evening news on TV to realize the cost of water is going to increase dramatically very soon, if in fact it hasn’t in your area already. Not only is that, in many areas of the country water districts limiting the use of water for irrigating the landscape. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to realize the facts that if you own your own water supply you can do whatever you want with it. So, it begs the question. What is it worth to have your own water supply that will keep your landscape healthy and green all summer long during restrictions? I think we all would agree it is PRICELESS.

A couple of other advantages sometimes overlooked. Fire protection in rural areas not serviced by hydrants in many areas requires 10,000-gal of water stored on site for fighting fires. Bruce talked to the Fire Chief in his area, which just experienced two devastating fires, and the Chief pointed out that none of the structures lost had supplemental water available and every structure that did was saved. When the pumper truck shows up they only have a limited amount of water to fight the fire and when it’s gone they have to leave. Having the extra water supply could be the difference between loosing you property and having something to go home to.

Underground cisterns don’t need engineered pads to hold the tanks and don’t clutter up you view. The other advantage would be; in areas that could lose water service in a disaster, cisterns would be a great resource of potable water using some commercially available purification devices. Earthquakes are a good example of a disaster that could disrupt water mains for quite a while.

In a very depressed economy, the first things to be eliminated are the disposable income items, such as ponds and water gardens. The really great thing about installing rain harvest storage systems is that the same tools and manpower are needed to install both kinds of systems. If the economy has resulted in your receiving fewer calls for water feature work, why not consider diversifying and ride the GREEN wave. Seriously take a look at rain harvest storage system installation. The drought and the economy don’t mean the end is near, to the contrary, you can find opportunity in any dark cloud. Remember, if you want the rainbow, you have to put up with the rain! In our case, the rainbow will come IF we capture and use rainwater sensibly.  

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

March/April 2009  PONDBIZ
Why you simply must get out to a seminar or trade show once in a while.

by Tom Graham

I think most of us would agree, it is tough to get away from the job for any reason, so to get away for a few days to attend a seminar often times seems simply impossible. After all it is not an urgent priority, right? Nothing is going to break if you don't get to a darn seminar.

Well, if this describes you of late, listen up. If you want to stay energized and excited about your business, sometimes you just have to get away from it for a few days to re-focus and re-charge. If you are not taking time on a regular basis to get out of the shop to see a trade show (as an attendee, not working it!) or take in a seminar, you may be stagnating and not even realize it.

Recently 25 pond builders gathered at Eric Triplet’s Exotic Aquatics facility in Redlands, California to do just that, and from all appearances, they got their money’s worth. The event featured a day of classroom style presentations and discussions, then two days on a pond build, where the group built a beautiful hybrid koi pond.

Eric got things heated up quickly by challenging the group to think globally about the business they were in. We all have a tendency to limit our thinking to what we already know, and be totally blind to other alternatives and opportunities that are around us every day. He described what a tremendous impact getting to know Kent Wallace of Living Water Solutions, Las Vegas Nevada has had on his business model. (They originally connected at a seminar – Pondapalooza.)

Kent builds only koi ponds, and Eric built primarily water garden style ponds, (what he calls eco-ponds), so they personified the traditional extremes of pond construction philosophies in today’s marketplace. At the 2007 Pondapalooza in Savana Georgia, they were teamed up to build a koi pond as part of the event. How was this going to work? Well, as luck would have it, when they started planning the design and construction of the pond they hit it off. They each let their guards down, got creative, and ended up having a lot of fun and forged a strong friendship and a new business alliance in the process.

Eric took the perspective early on that he was going to use the opportunity to learn what all the fuss was about, with traditional koi pond construction. To do this he spent many hours leading up to the pond build on the phone with Kent to learn as much as he could about why koi pond builders do the things they do.

This was not a one way conversation however. Throughout the planning, construction and subsequent work with Eric, Kent had the opportunity to experience a great deal about what have become traditional water garden design techniques. Their interchage of ideas has been a clear win for both Eric and Kent, but also for a growing number of other pond builders who are now reaping the benefits of this teaming up and cross...
fertilization of ideas, techniques and technologies.

Eric now confidently offers four distinct varieties of ponds to his prospective customers - the peaceful calm of the serene, still-water, water garden; the bustling life of the eco-pond; the majesty of a pure koi pond; plus a fourth option which is a hybrid of the eco-pond and the koi pond concepts.

At the seminar, Kent noted the many efficiencies that have been developed in the water garden pond business over the past decade. His exposure to this technology has lead to his development of a number of new custom devices, filters, fittings and gadgets to make the construction process even simpler and cleaner for the pond builder. Kent has a full machine shop, and is a chronic tinkerer, so

This all started because they got involved with a seminar. Remember, these kinds of events are where you get a chance to relax and talk to your peers in a way that you simply cannot duplicate any other way. You are not under the pressure to get a pond in, so you can explore new ideas, challenge your believe systems, and expand your capabilities. In other words, grow your brain.

So as you read and hear about seminars, training sessions, pond builds or shows, do yourself and your business a favor, and get out of the office for a few days. You will almost certainly come back with new ideas, and re-discovered enthusiasm, to say nothing of a whole lot of new best friends to boot. ❝
Fred Bell, Industry Leader Retires

by Cindy Graham

Fred Bell at PONDAPALOOZA held in Atlanta, GA

Mark Munley, VP – Sales and Marketing for Firestone Specialty Products said, “Firestone Specialty Products considers Fred to be one of the true ‘Founding Fathers’ of the Ponding Industry.”

Fred was instrumental in EPDM gaining global acceptance into the ponding market as domestic brand leaders now use EPDM rubber liners as a staple in their pond kits and other offerings that they provide to the North American and International Markets.

Today, EPDM rubber liners are used in many applications. Over Fred’s Career, over a billion sq. ft. of EPDM has been used to satisfy water containment/conveyance applications.

As Mark Munley said, “the industry needs more individuals with such a vision—we are blessed as a result of his efforts.”

Fred also volunteered his time to help this industry. He was a founding member of NAPP (The National Association of Pond Professionals). As Derek Guihechi said, “he was a big cheerleader of the entire water garden industry and was instrumental in getting the industry to where it is today.”

Roseanne Conrad, Garden Pond Promotions, first meet Fred in 1995. She was publishing a newsletter called Water Garden News. Fred traveled from Tennessee to Pennsylvania to meet Roseanne and see how they could work together to further the industry. It was through Fred’s encouragement that Roseanne turned her newsletter into a full color magazine, which is how Pondkeeper magazine was born.

Fred always made sure that Firestone provided liner and materials for the educational pond builds that were held in conjunction with PONDAPALOOZA. Roseanne said, “Fred was a great source of support, advice and inspiration. He promoted and defended the industry.”

Derek says, “Fred still stops by the office, but he also is enjoying working on some antique cars.”

Fred thank you for all you have done and we hope you enjoy your retirement.
Why You Should Start
an IPaWGS Chapter

by Mike White

What is IPaWGS? IPaWGS stands for International Pond and Water Garden Society and is the recently formed hobbyist branch of the IPPCA (International Professional Pond Contractors Association). As the name implies, IPaWGS is a pond and water garden club formatted for the hobbyist. You may ask, “Why discuss a hobbyist club in PondBiz magazine, it’s not published for hobbyists?” For any Retailer or Contractor, there are many benefits from starting and maintaining an IPaWGS chapter.

- IPaWGS is part of the IPPCA and supports the LAT (Legislative Action Team) and BST (Bio Safety Team) arms of the IPPCA through financial support, creating a base to fund and influence lobbyists and lawmakers for the benefit and on behalf of the Pond and Waterscape industry.

- When starting a chapter, we suggest you use your current customer base to get hobbyists to the first meeting, increasing IPaWGS membership. This increases contact with your customers, resulting in more professional exposure, resulting in more sales.

- We also suggest an invitation to the meeting be extended to all the hobbyist friends of your customers. This will increase your customer base and that means more professional exposure, which will result in more sales.

- Advertizing the first, as well as any subsequent meetings, creates a reason for non customers to attend, experience your professionalism, and become your customers.

- Your current customers will now see you as not someone just trying to sell them something, but also as someone trying to help them out and be a friendly professional advisor. When your customers need something, they are more likely to buy it from you, someone they care about, rather than a company they don’t know.

- If you offer a discount to IPaWGS members, it will increase IPaWGS membership and keep those members, and their friends, coming back to you.

- If you run a retail business, when members come in they will spend more time there, as they now have a closer relationship with you and your store. The longer and more frequently they are there, the more money they will spend.

- At the meetings, most of the people will be your customers. They probably have a favorable opinion of you or they would not be there. When they talk to other people with the same opinion, that opinion is positively reinforced. If someone is unfamiliar with you and hears these comments, they will leave with a favorable opinion of you. After the first meeting or two, some may even think you can walk on water.
• If it is possible to hold the meetings at your place of business, this can also increase your business. How would this work? They now have a reason to come to your business. When they hear someone talking favorably about a product or service you provide, they will think they need it and be at the location to get it.

• You might think about offering a member’s only sale. This enforces the members’ impression that they are special and as a result, will be more likely to buy things. It also makes nonmembers start to think they are missing out on something. You might offer members the first chance to buy from a new shipment of fish or new product. Because they know each of these opportunities are special and they don’t want to miss out on it, they are going to spend more time, which equals to money spent, in your store or utilizing your services than they would have without the IPaWGS connection.

To me, starting a chapter of IPaWGS has been a win-win situation for everyone involved. Yes, it will take some time on your part, but the return on investment is well worth it (like 40% higher sales the first two months alone). In these economic times, we all have to do everything possible to make money. By not starting an IPaWGS chapter, you not only are missing out on a very fulfilling professional opportunity, you are leaving money on the table. ☻

The IPPCA is a Not For Profit Trade Association. For more information, go to www.IPPCA.com and www.IPaWGS.com, or call (770) 592-9790.

Mike White
White Water Filters
St. Charles, Illinois
Northern Illinois IPaWGS

have myself used almost every plant there is (I worked for an Aquatic plant nursery for 2 years and have taken an aquatic botany course in college).

I was hoping that you would share the other plants you have used in your veggie filter and their success rates with me. I would appreciate it. I have one big negative that I wanted to mention to you. I understand why you choose yellow iris - it does do a fantastic job. But being in the Midwest you have different winters than the rest of the country and that iris can be controlled better where you are. It is listed as a noxious weed in many states and you did not even mention that important fact and how invasive it truly is. I tell my customers to rip it out and destroy it. It escapes out of the wild and displaces native species, and can take over entire backyards! I have seen several examples! You also did not list any alternatives. Please take this the right way, but a lot of people are ignorant and do not see the responsibility of the retailer to properly educate the general public (and especially contractors). Thank you for your time and information. Kerri, Waterfall Pond Supply, www.flowranger.com

Kerri

Response from Jamie – You are 100% correct in that the yellow flag (the plant that I talk about in the article) can be considered invasive in three regions of the USA. It is a nonnative. I know that Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut have listed it as a prohibited or listed invasive. Oregon, Montana and Washington have also listed it in various ways.

In rereading the article I thought I stated something like “considered invasive in some regions” but I had not. I do not worry about the plant here in the Midwest because it is not invasive here. Even where it can be considered invasive I would not worry as much when it is planted on The Grid. A ponderer still has to worry about the seed escaping and germinating. This is easily controlled, however, by cutting off the spent blooms.

We should add a disclaimer to the use of Iris pseudacorus (yellow flag iris) in the next issue of Pond Biz magazine.

Almost every water plant grown can be considered invasive somewhere.

The reason I like the plant so much is that it grows very well without soil and is hardy for regions where it regularly ices up. I have tried several other plants on The Grid. Other species of Iris have been tried -- like Iris versicolor, which is our native iris. I have tried water lilies on The Grid. Both of these attempts were not successful. I was going to try water celeri but I personally have a problem with it being invasive -- even though it is not listed as being invasive by the state of Iowa.

I would pick a plant that has an aggressive root system without soil and is hardy to your region. The rhizome of the Iris makes it a good candidate due to the ability to “tie” it to The Grid.

Thanks for your comments. Please continue your dialog with me – I do appreciate your email. Jamie

Jamie Beyer, beyersbg@aol.com

Women in the Water Feature Industry, Jan/Feb 09 issue, pg 50
Good Afternoon Tom, Saw the article on Heather Woolf in the latest issue. Great article. Met her at a seminar in the past. Great person. Just want to let you know there are more women out there. My wife Sherry has been in the business longer than I have so if you need additional sources for “Women in the Water Feature Industry,” she would be a good one. She knows as much or more than some of the top builders out there. Just thought I would pass that on. Please visit the website to get more information on her. Have a great one and your doing an awesome job with the magazine. Thanks, Alan, Carolina Pondscapes, Inc., www.CarolinaPondscapes.com ☻
NEW TetraPond Products Work Together to Keep the Pond Sparkling Clear

BLACKSBURG, VA. – The TetraPond® water garden experts have developed five new products for 2009 to complement the NEW TetraPond Bio-Active Pressure Filter and DHP Pump. Each product works to promote clean, healthy water while allowing pond owners more time to enjoy the sights and sounds of their backyard retreats.

The five NEW products include: The TetraPond Waterfall Filter, the TetraPond FK3 Filtration Fountain Kit, the TetraPond SF1 Submersible Flat Box Filter and the TetraPond TL3 Triple Light Set for Ponds With the focus on products that help add fountains and waterfalls to ponds, TetraPond recognizes the many benefits these new enhancements can bring to a water garden.

"The sight and sound of moving water adds an extra dimension to a garden and enhances pond appeal," commented Curt Nueninghoff, brand development director for TetraPond. "In addition to the beauty that water features bring to a pond, they also serve a fundamental purpose. Waterfalls, streams, fountains and spitters help oxygenate the pond and provide a biofiltration benefit. As helpful bacteria become embedded in the stones, harmful ammonia is converted into relatively harmless nitrates. Pond fish also benefit from the oxygenation and biofiltration."

About TetraPond

TetraPond is an international leader of water gardening products, as demonstrated by consecutive Industry Recognition Awards for product innovation in pet specialty retailing. TetraPond offers a complete line of products for pond enthusiasts, including pumps, filters, clarifiers, water treatments, and the world's most popular fish food. TetraPond's U.S. headquarters is located in Blacksburg, Va. For more information, call your water garden experts at 1-800-526-0650. Or visit www.tetrapond.com and register for TetraCare®, our free online support program, where you can sign up for our award-winning Into the Pond e-newsletter, providing seasonal information for healthy ponds.

Atlantic’s EcoBlox

Catch the Wave…... Atlantic Water Gardens; Mantua, Ohio is pleased to introduce our new EcoBlox water matrix for pond-free water features – Atlantic’s newest and most effective water matrix available today.

Atlantic’s EcoBlox allows for thirty-one and a half gallons of water storage- more than three times more water than traditional gravel basins. Our 8 panel construction offers exceptional strength. Since the EcoBlox was designed with ½” by ¾” hole sizes, the EcoBlox has the advantage of being used with smaller sizes of gravel.

Whether installing a fountain or other pond-free water features, our heavy-duty components of the EcoBlox are engineered for easy installation and maintenance.

Fax: 330-274-8790
brandon@atlanticwatergardens.com
www.atlanticwatergardens.com

Factory Address
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Mantua OH 44255

For further information please contact….

Brandon Dwyer
National Sales Manager
Atlantic Water Gardens
Phone: 1-877-80-PONDS (7-6637) x 204
Linda Hernandez New Tradeshow Coordinator for Ecological Laboratories

Ecological Laboratories, Inc.
Lynbrook, NY

In the continuing commitment to our distributor network, Ecological Laboratories, Inc. has recently hired Linda Hernandez, as tradeshow coordinator, at their manufacturing facility in Cape Coral, FL. Linda brings 28 years of experience in tradeshow operations, sales support, and management with Vo-Toys, Inc. and Aro Manufacturing.

Ecological Laboratories, Inc.
info@MicrobeLift.com
www.MicrobeLift.com

Booth Award Winners Unveiled

Landscape Ontario Kicks off First Day of Congress 2009

(Toronto, ON) January 7, 2009 – With Go Green Today being the theme, Canada’s 36th International Horticultural Lawn and Garden Trade Show and Conference kicked off on January 6th at the Toronto Congress Centre. The three-day show will allow industry professionals to browse over 600 exhibitors, discover more than 150 new products, get the latest ideas for design and construction, attend numerous workshops and network with industry experts and professionals from all different sectors of the business.

Each year Congress attracts in excess of 12,000 people to Canada’s largest horticulture, landscape and lawn & garden trade show and conference. On the show’s first day, booth award winners were announced in seven different categories.

The winners are listed below.

Category – Winner Name – Booth #
Best Promotion Award – New Roads National Leasing – #71
Best Booth 200 sq ft or less (excluding heavy machinery)
– Aquascape, Inc – #304
Best Booth 201 ~ 400 sq ft (excluding heavy machinery)
– Sheridan Nurseries – #1342
Best Booth Over 400 sq ft (excluding heavy machinery)
– Santerra Stonecraft – #332
Best Booth Small Equipment – The Mojack – #276
Best Booth Heavy Equipment – Strongco Equipment – #660
Best in Show – Envirobond Products Corp – #1113

CrystalClear® Pond & Lake Treatments

For this year’s show, Landscape Ontario has joined forces with Communities in Bloom, Project EverGreen and the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association to present The Green Forum.

Additional information on Landscape Ontario’s Congress 2009 can be found at: www.lcongress.com
About Congress 2009 Partners:
Landscape Ontario is the largest horticultural trade association in North America with more than 2,300 members. Its mission is to be the leader in representing, promoting and fostering a favourable environment for the advancement of the horticultural industry in Ontario. www.landscapeontario.com
Press Releases

Nickie Stringfellow Appointed Manager of Inside Sales and Customer Service!

Winston Company, Inc. is proud to introduce our full line of eco-friendly pond & lake treatments. The CrystalClear® line includes an EPA Registered algicide, pond clarifiers, blue dye, pH products and all-natural bacteria and enzyme treatments. Say goodbye to cooper sulfate and harsh treatments forever. For healthy, clear water your choice should always be CrystalClear®.

To Make Contact:
Jeff Spillars, National Sales Manager
800-331-9099
jspillars@winstoncompany.com

Nickie Stringfellow was appointed Manager of Inside Sales and Customer Service, a new position with Anjon Manufacturing. Ms. Stringfellow joined Anjon in 2008 as a Customer Service Representative. Stringfellow will be responsible for achieving 100% customer satisfaction. Additionally Stringfellow will lead the Inside Sales team for Anjon.

“Surpassing our customers’ expectations will continue to be Anjon's goal” Stringfellow stated at the announcement. Anjon CEO, Jon Lottes followed up stating, “Nickie has proven to be a leader in the customer service field and all who come in contact with her benefit from her overflowing pleasant voice and attitude.”

To reach Nickie Stringfellow her e-mail is nstringfellow@anjonponds.com, 1.800.553.5605 x 104 or receive an Anjon Catalog – www.anjonmfg.com

Please send your Press Releases to Cindy at cindy@pondbizmag.com. To see all Press Releases see our web site - www.pondbizmag.com

New D-I-Y Continuous Waterfall Kit

Islandia, New York, December 20, 2008. Danner Manufacturing, a leading supplier of pond pumps, filters, and accessories announces the addition of two new Pondmaster® Do-It-Yourself continuous waterfall kits. These kits contain all of the necessary parts for a homeowner to successfully create a stunning waterfall feature without the added construction and safety considerations associated with a typical backyard pond installation.

According to company president Bill Minnick, these “…kits will give retailers an opportunity to get their customers into the water gardening mood without scaring them away once they understand what’s involved in putting in a pond. The two models we are offering differ only in their pumping capacities. The Deluxe Model 05255 includes an efficient 1200 GPH magnetic pump while the standard Model 05250 uses a smaller 700 GPH magnetic pump. The other major consideration with these waterfall kits is that they generally do not require approvals since the water disappears into a buried pump vault thereby obviating any safety concerns.”

These complete waterfall kits include a pump vault, a waterfall box, a magnetic drive pump, PVC tubing, an 8’X12’ PVC liner, plus all the clamps and connections required for a complete installation. Each kit is packaged in its own corrugated container with a full color label with complete details on each component. Kits are available for the 2008 season and are currently being shown at trade shows nationwide.

Contact Danner Manufacturing (631.234.5261) or go to www.dannermfg.com for complete details.
**Upcoming Events**

**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

**July 16 – July 18th IWGS Main Symposium**  
**Extended July 19 – 20th**  
**IWGS 25th Anniversary** - event held simultaneously with Aquascape’s Pondemonium as they celebrate their 10 year Anniversary  
Pheasant Run Hotel, St. Charles, IL • www.iwgs.org  
Speakers: Gary Wittstock, Clay Allgood and more  
Tours: Ball Horticulture Gardens, Shedd Aquarium(behind the scenes), Chicago Botanic Gardens, Aquascapes, Inc.,  
Area Water Gardening Store, and a Pond Tour

**August 23 – August 26 - NEW Date**  
**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.gardenmarketexpo.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 an event you would like to have listed? Send information to it to – cindy@pondbizmag.com.

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Read his article on page 13 about the Sanke

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- **Hikari Gold**
  A daily diet offering color enhancing capacity for use by typical koi keepers.

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