Building with Concrete

Winter - Moving Fish Indoors
MAP Pricing Debate - In Depth
Waterlily of the Year - IWGS
Hi Utsuri Koi - Metallic Sheen

Product of the Year Announced
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8 **COVER – Pond Construction with Concrete**  
Demi Fortuna, Atlantic Water Gardens  
Concrete has been in use for over 2,000 years and done right it can last longer than our lifetime. Should you use concrete to build a pond? Learn from an industry expert how it’s done correctly, understanding the pluses and minuses of the material. Do you know where most mistakes are made and the secret to a successful pour? Demi will tell you here.

15 **Overwintering Pond Fish Indoors**  
Jamie Beyer, Midwest Waterscapes  
In some cases it makes sense to move pond fish indoors over the winter. You do have three basic options for overwintering fish beyond letting them fend for themselves outdoors: add supplemental heat, build a greenhouse-like structure over the pond or, the focus of this article, move the fish indoors. Learn about the precautions to take when you move pond fish in for the winter and back out when spring returns.

20 **Language of Koi – Hikari Utsuri**  
Taro Kodama, Kodama Koi Farm  
Hikari means metallic, thus Hikari Utsuri is an Utsuri with a metallic sheen to the scales and skin. It is often hard to find good examples of this variety, so when you see one be sure to buy it. The two qualities that you want to focus on is the koi’s sheen and pattern. Taro shares his knowledge of Hikari Utsuri, and provides helpful tips on how to make them fly out the door.

26 **Product of the Year 2012 Announced**  
Cindy Graham, POND Trade Magazine  
The Product of the Year 2012 competition yielded two outstanding winners, one in each major category – Pond Equipment and Pond Product. Each is a new and unique addition to the industry. See who won here.

30 **Waterlily of the Year 2012 Winners**  
Tish Folsom, Executive Administrator, IWGS  
Tropical Punch and Kiss the Sky are two of the new waterlilies introduced at the IWGS New Waterlily Competition that you will want to see and know. They were selected as Best New Waterlily and 2nd Best New Waterlily in 2012. Other winners include Manee Red, Pink Pom Pom and Sand Pearl. Your customers will be excited to see these new varieties and you have some great new winning lilies to recommend.

33 **Get Your Customers Involved with Their Pond Leaks**  
Jeff Krenner, Paradise Ponds and Waterfalls  
You know this spring you are going to have customers, old and new, call you about the dreaded “pond leak.” Be prepared to answer their...
questions in a way that gets them involved in the solution and helps you charge for your time when you go help! This will save the customer money, save you time and hopefully get the problem resolved happily.

35 **MAP Pricing Debate – In Depth**  
*John Olson, Graysone Industry*

MAP, yes it can lead to a heated debate. John Olson tries to give a broad, yet in-depth overview of this hot topic. What is MAP? It is Minimum Advertised Pricing. MAP is not MSRP, short for Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price. Is MAP pricing the best practice for the current retail arena? John explains the Pros/Cons of each so you can decide what’s best for your store.

42 **INFO-TANZA has Great Event in Orlando**  
*Cindy Graham, POND Trade Magazine*

The industry association, IPPCA, met in Orlando in November to elect officers, attend seminars and meet with manufacturers at the large tradeshow held in conjunction with the IA. It was a four-day event and filled to the brim. See who was selected as the 5-Star Contractor of the Year and much more.

46 **Basic Business Entities Explained**  
*Mark E. Batterby*

Quickly learn about the different business entities that are available to the businesses in the pond industry. You have heard them before – Sole Proprietor, Partnership, LLC, and Corporation. There are tax benefits/detriments to each of them. What will fit your business best? A 25-year veteran will wade through each of the choices and help you confirm your current status, or consider a change.

50 **Pond-building – Ladies Day**  
*Alice Morgan, Pond Pro Shop*

Dirt Don’t Hurt – and pink was the theme of the day. With 57 ladies in attendance everyone had a chance to see that Ladies can build a water feature! Each attendee received a gift sack with a tee shirt, pink gloves, note pads…and pond-building instructions. Seeing is often believing; now these women can feel confident that they can build a water feature.

54 **Finishing Up – Pond Advice 5¢**

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See the Pond Industry Directory at pondsources.com
Upcoming Events

**February 2-7**
IWGS 2013 Symposium – Cruise
See their website for details.
www.iwgs.org

**February 7–8**
Water Garden Expo 2013
Shawnee, Oklahoma
www.wgexpo.com
See ad on page 24.

**February 23–24**
Koi Club of San Diego Koi Show
Del Mar Fairgrounds
Held by the Koi Club of San Diego.
See their website for more details.
www.koiclubsandiego.org

**May 7–9**
National Hardware Show
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas, Nevada
www.nationalhardwareshow.com

**August 22–25**
Pondemonium 2013
St. Charles, IL – watch for details.
www.aquascapeinc.com

**November 6–7**
Irrigation Show 2013
Austin Convention Center
Austin, Texas
www.irrigation.org

Are you attending an event that you think others should know about?
Are you hosting an event and want more people to come?

Please let us know. We will post events here and on our website. - send them to pr@pondtrademag.com.

We wish you a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Moving? - Let Us Know

If you are moving, please update your address with us so we can update our records.

Use the forms from the post office, or drop us an email at subscribe@pondtrademag.com, with your old and new contact information.
At INFO-TANZA in Florida we hope you had a chance to meet Lora Lee Gelles, POND Trade Magazine’s newest team member. She had a great time and met many wonderful people during the four-day event. Lora Lee has a degree in art, 20 years experience in the publishing industry as an art director, graphic designer and copy editor, and loves to travel like we do.

With the start of a new year remember to renew your subscription online. It only takes a minute and guarantees that we will keep you on the mail list.

We have gotten more thank you cards this year then any other year. We always appreciate hearing from you. Remember to also thank our advertisers; they are the reason we are able to send this magazine to you for free.

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As we enter 2013, it is important to take a moment, and focus on our course forward. POND Trade Magazine remains committed to providing you the best information and resources available, to help you with your pond and water feature business. Please let us know how we can help you this year.

Publisher
Tom Graham
Pond Construction with Concrete

by Demi Fortuna,
Atlantic Water Gardens

Cement Through the Ages

Concrete and mortar have been favored by pond and fountain builders since the Roman Empire, and the formula has changed little in the past 2000 years. Limestone and clay are mixed, heated and ground to the silky powder we call cement. Concrete is made by adding water, sand and gravel to the cement, while mortar refers to a finer sand and cement mixture used for bonding brick and stone.

Our modern formula was first cooked up on a stove in 1824 by British inventor Joseph Aspdin, a real ‘kitchen chemist.’ He named it Portland cement for its similarity to stone from the nearby Isle of Portland, but it’s basically the same stuff that built Ancient Rome.

Properly mixed and applied, under the right conditions concrete can last a very long time – the intact, magnificent roof of the Pantheon is still the world’s largest unreinforced concrete dome almost two thousand years after it was built. Roman aqueducts and fountains built two millennia ago are still in daily use today. That said, concrete is NOT a “set it and forget it” material. There are a number of requirements to be met if it is to last.
Cement and Water

Portland is hydraulic cement, meaning it hardens and cures upon contact with water, but the exact process is so complicated that we don't fully understand it even today. The proper amount of water is critical in mixing concrete – too little won't fully hydrate the mix, leading to an uneven cure and too much will weaken it. The curing process doesn't stop with mixing, either. Concrete needs to be kept evenly moist for as long as feasible after pouring to develop its full strength, at least 3 days, but it will continue to strengthen for a year or more if kept moist.

U ntreated concrete is usually quite porous, absorbing and allowing water to slowly seep through microscopic spaces, but it can be made highly resistant to the passage of water by using fine aggregates and waterproofing additives to close the pores. This makes it an ideal material for ponds and waterfalls in warm weather climates, where prolonged freezes aren't an issue. In colder areas water trapped inside the concrete can freeze, expanding from within and causing cracking and spalling. Ice sheets on the surface of the water can force walls apart, causing structural damage and leaks. Damage from frost is usually progressive if left unattended, so temperatures below 32°F are a cause for concern and require different strategies than warm weather water features.

Foundations for Concrete Structures

Concrete has tremendous compressive strength, capable of supporting thousands of pounds per square inch, but doesn't bend or stretch very well, so the most critical requirement of any concrete structure is a proper foundation, set on undisturbed soil that will not move or settle. In colder climates footings must be set below the frost line to avoid movement during freeze-thaw cycles, usually 3 to 4 feet below grade.

That may sound very deep, but if we're considering the expense of concrete to start with, then we're generally talking about a more elaborate pond, perhaps a koi pond where the deeper the water is, the better. Most koi ponds are deeper than the frost line, into undisturbed soil, so the depth of the footing is often of no great concern. We'll usually dig out the pond as carefully as possible first, leaving the walls vertical, then we'll excavate the trench for the footing at least 8" deeper than the rest of the pond, always below the frost line and at least 12" wide, to provide a solid, stable base that's a little wider than the walls.

We pour the footing level and set some kind of 'key' to lock the walls to the footings. This can be as simple as regularly spaced rebar rods set into the wet concrete, or a groove in the top of the footing that the wall can lock into. An 8" x 12" footing may sound like overkill, but it ensures the walls will stay straight and solid and support any load likely to be set on them, and with 8" walls the 12" wide footing provides a 4" shelf that the floor will key into later.

Waterproofing

There are three different ways I know of to waterproof the concrete pond, all starting with the solid foundation just described.

The first method is the conventional way to pour a fully waterproof concrete shell. The pond is excavated, a footing poured, the appropriate reinforcement rods and wire set in place and forms built. Latex or acrylic waterproofing solutions are added to the mixing water, to close the pores in the concrete and eliminate seepage through the walls. The concrete must be carefully mixed and vibrated into place to eliminate air bubbles, and the additives can be costly, but in warm climates where frost isn't an issue this method works very well. Although the entire shell of a good-sized pond can be poured all at once by an experienced crew, we prefer doing the footing first, then pouring the walls, then the floor, sealing the seams between the three elements with waterstop gasketing. The flexible gasket is set on the footing before the wall is poured on top of it, sealing the joint from the inside as the gasket swells on contact with water. We'll place an expansion joint vertically on the inside of the wall and a second gasket on that 4" shelf at the base of the wall before the floor is poured, to form an elastic seal that allows for expansion and contraction of the floor. The coping is set on top of the walls with a simple, strong, waterproof mortar made by mixing one 45lb. bag of thinset to two 70lb. bags of Type S mortar, a great mix I first heard about online from Doug Hoover of Aquamedia (many thanks for giving this great formula away for free!) This method of pond construction is effective, permanent and fully waterproof as long as there are no cracks, so it's ideal for the Southern States and the West Coast. It isn't optimal where freeze-thaw cycles are a concern.

The second method dispenses with the cost and additional labor of integral concrete waterproofing by applying a
waterproofing coating on the inner surfaces of the pond after the shell is constructed, and it works with either poured shells or with cinder block construction. There are many types of coatings, ranging from liquid EPDM rubber compounds to two-part epoxies to cement-based slurries to simple paints, so there’s a waterproofing compound for every job. The more elastic preparations bridge small cracks and even tolerate a small amount of movement, so they can be very forgiving and are often used to waterproof leaking existing concrete ponds. The key to these applications is proper surface preparation, so the manufacturer’s instructions must be strictly followed. The more stable the base, the better the coating will perform, so this method of pond construction also works best where winters are mild.

Both of these methods are well known and the steps involved in their construction well documented, so I won’t go into further detail, but unless you’re planning on draining the water feature for the winter, we’ve found neither is ideal in harsh winter country. Where we build, in the mildest area of New York, a hundred freeze-thaw cycles is a gentle winter, temps regularly visit the 20’s and we can stay below freezing for weeks. We needed a way to permanently waterproof concrete regardless of weather, so we developed a simple way to construct a concrete pond so it will always stay completely sealed under all conditions. We combine flexible and concrete liners. Burying a flexible liner inside a concrete wall offers advantages over either method alone. In contrast to straight concrete, seams and small cracks cannot leak, so integrated gaskets, waterproofing additives and coatings are unnecessary, and freeze-thaw cycles are no longer a concern. In contrast to liner ponds, the waterproof EPDM or PVC membrane is fully encapsulated between geotextile layers surrounded by concrete, permanently protected from sunlight, weather, wear and vandalism, so it’s ideal for harsh conditions or public water feature construction sites.

Although liner and geotextile is an additional expense over plain concrete or cinderblock, it is usually comparable to the cost of acrylic additives or two-part coatings, and typically less expensive than sprayed polyurea foam, and it involves little additional technical expertise. This isn’t brain surgery. On the contrary, this simple, obvious method is easier and more tolerant of adverse conditions or less-than-ideal preparation, so we’ve found it adapts well to any jobsite.

**Hybrid Liner/Concrete Pond Construction**

We tried, with some success, to simply skim-coat EPDM liner with a couple of inches of cement, but found the simple way wasn’t so simple – the liner was vulnerable to penetration from sharps in the ground, tree roots and even shifting soils.
that settled and exposed the membrane, not to mention those hideous destructive juggernaut, rodents (hint: Chip and Dale do bite).

Nowadays, we’ll build outer walls on a solid footing just like the first two methods, either pouring or mortaring cinderblock in place; the type and thickness depend on the application. If we’re going to pour the walls, the soil can serve as the outer form for the pour if we’re careful and cut the walls vertical.

If we’re going to use block we make the excavation a little wider all the way around so there’s a little room to work: we’ll backfill after the walls are set. We always use galvanized wall reinforcement, like Durawall, between our courses of cinderblock and we fill each course with concrete – the small additional expense adds tremendous strength and resistance to displacement. The walls don’t come all the way to the level of the water surface; we stop 8-10” below the intended water level to create a Rock Shelf for the natural rock coping to come. Once the walls are in, we backfill and level the soil behind them to create a broad shelf for the coping (and any Perimeter Bogs we might install behind the coping).

We’ll be pouring the floor last, but we need to grade the floor out now so we can cover the entire excavation – floor, walls and Rock Shelf - with a non-woven 6oz. geotextile, leaving plenty of extra to pull up behind coping and bogs to above water level. Our waterproof liner, usually 45mil EPDM, goes over the geotextile, again leaving enough above the walls to cover the shelf then come up another foot to well above the water line. We could cover the liner directly with concrete at this point, but we’ve found it’s both safer and much easier to cover the liner with another layer of geotextile, not just for protection, but because cement sticks to it like crazy, even vertically.

![Tirolessa Sprayer](image)

**Tirolessa Sprayer**

This inexpensive Tirolessa Sprayer works with 7-12cfm at 90 psi to spray a 3/8” layer of rich cement. Scoop and shoot, let dry, repeat to desired thickness.

While we set stones we smear the rubber liner with a thin Portland slurry. When dry it’ll give the next layer of sand and cement something to adhere to.
The final step is to cover the liner/geotextile ‘sandwich’ completely. Depending on the job, we may build both inner and outer walls of 4” block, or spray cement stucco over the geotextile, 3/8” at a time, with our little Tirolessa sprayer that we absolutely love for smaller jobs. Finally, we dump out a rich, fiber-reinforced mix on the floor a wheelbarrow at a time and trowel the sides and bottom smooth, working our way out as we go. We leave at least 3” on the floor and 2” on the walls, and the ‘gorilla hair’ type poly fibers help keep the cement in place even if it cracks or crazes on the surface.

Consider creating a design or covering the floor with pebbles if the job warrants a special touch – it’s always appreciated, even if it’s rarely seen after the pond grows in. The coping goes in last, with the largest stones mortared in with that 140lb mortar/40lb thinset mix.

For koi ponds, we lay in smaller stones dry in front of Perimeter Bogs, simple gravel beds 6 to 8” deep on 2 to 3-foot wide areas of the Rock shelf with the liner pulled up at the outer edge, so water can filter in and get filtered by the roots. Look up Active Bog Filtration for some really cool ideas to keep koi ponds algae-free.

Winding up...

There isn’t enough room on these pages to go into greater detail, but I hope I’ve given you the idea that concrete can be a great option.

In warmer areas concrete ponds:
• can be built and waterproofed many different ways, so they’re easily adaptable to most sites;
**Concrete Goldfish Pond with 2-part Epoxy Coating**

- provide strong, lasting, virtually limitless structure regardless of soil conditions;
- can be shaped and smoothed to make cleaning easier and safer than liner ponds;
- properly constructed and waterproofed, are very low maintenance;
- offer resistance to damage and vandalism that bare liner, or even gravel-bottom ponds cannot match.

In **colder climates**, using a membrane buried in the concrete shell to waterproof the pond offers all of the previous advantages, and is impervious to leaking from cracking and crazing that’s almost inevitable where winter holds an icy grip. Maintenance is even lower than in the warm weather ponds, since there’s no coating to scratch or wear off and settling cracks do no harm, and the liners can last virtually forever protected by their stony armor.

There’s no reason to shy away; concrete is far easier to use than ever before, thanks to advances in additive technology and delivery systems, and adding an impermeable liner makes ponds that are literally bulletproof. We’ve used this technique for ponds from 250 to 10000 gallons, and I’m pretty sure it’s adaptable to much more than I’ve run into. Give concrete construction a try next time you need a long-lasting, low maintenance, virtually indestructible pond.

Contact me at demi@atlanticwatergardens.com with questions; I’d be delighted to help.

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**About the Author**

**Demi Fortuna** is Director of Product Information for industry leader Atlantic Water Gardens, traveling and working with contractors and distributors alike in developing targeted Atlantic sales support materials. Fortuna has over 25 years of experience in all aspects of water garden design and construction, the last ten years in product research, development, sales and product training. When he isn't presenting complex topics via seminars and lectures in an accessible, enjoyable manner, he can usually be found up to his elbows in pond slime working with his two sons, Edwin and Ely, in their water feature design/build business August Moon Designs. Demi can be contacted at demi@atlanticwatergardens.com or visit www.facebook.com/AugustMoonDesigns.
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Overwintering
Pond Fish Indoors

by Jamie Beyer
Midwest Waterscapes

Just how cold can it get in some parts of the Continental United States? Does it get cold enough to freeze ponds solid?

It can get very cold, as low as -30 to -35°F. And yes, it can get cold enough to freeze some ponds solid. Small ponds and above-ground ponds are especially at risk of this happening. Larger, in-ground outdoor ponds of, say, 1000 gallons that are at least 2.5 feet deep can successfully overwinter hardy fish without supplemental heat during these severe conditions. Please refer to my Sept/Oct 2009 Pond Trade article (http://www.pondtrademag.com/articles/ar-73/), “Overwintering Koi Under Thick Ice.” The outdoor techniques outlined in that article have worked for overwintering both koi and hardy goldfish in my own ponds as well as those of my clients for over 20 years.

There are people with large in-ground ponds who successfully overwinter all their fish in certain winters, while in other winters they lose some or all of their fish. How can this be?

This is due to all the variables that each pond experiences going into and during the winter, giving each pond its own uniqueness. The severity of the particular winter, the amount of organic matter in the pond, the number of fish and/or increase in size of fish over the years and the health of the fish going into winter are the proven variables. Some other variables are more theory than fact. Stay tuned for a future article on this subject.

This article is for those people who have lost fish attempting to overwinter them outside which may be due to the above variables. It also is for people who have those small ponds in areas where the temperatures can get to 10°F. or colder. For all of these ponders there are three other options for overwintering fish. They are: adding supplemental heat, building a greenhouse-like structure over the pond, or moving the fish indoors.

Supplying supplemental heat to an outdoor pond with a stock tank heater can be very successful, but it is imperative that aeration is also used. For mild winters the heat addition alone may be enough to overwinter the fish, but in more severe winters both heat and aeration are necessary. Always use aeration with the heater – it is too risky not to. Aeration that is too heavy in small ponds can create a current that the fish will have to fight all winter. They simply do not have that much energy during the winter and can die. In these situations, all that is needed is a good stream of bubbles located in the center and on the bottom of the pond.

100-gallon containers make excellent indoor ponds for overwintering hardy goldfish. This size can easily contain 50 to 75 – 3” Calico Shubunkin goldfish if kept at 50°F. Aeration is provided along with large sponge filters. In this situation, the containers are not covered because the fish are small and will not normally jump. If larger fish were kept in this situation then the container should be covered with a jump-proof type of cover.
There are a variety of heaters but, for the extreme cold we are talking about, a 1500-watt floating stock tank type of heater is necessary. The down side of this option is that the electrical costs can bust the budget. These costs could be as high as $50/month, or more. Of course, there are even bigger heaters that can really chew up a budget. My experience tells me that, unless you provide some kind of insulation around the pond, you literally are “spitting into the wind” with these heaters. The heat loss is extremely fast on a zero-degree day.

Building a greenhouse or other type of structure over the pond is another option. However, this can be a huge cost and a big undertaking. Most will not want to do this. Or “This will simply not be an option for most people.”

Due to these high costs, moving fish into an inside pond is the best option. So, in this article we will discuss the techniques for overwintering pond fish indoors.

Even with larger ponds, all warm water fish (tropical fish) and the more exotic breeds of goldfish that are not quite as hardy will need to be moved into warmer inside conditions. Most goldfish that have a body that is egg-shaped, and the trilobed-tailed goldfish, are not as hardy. I have tried to overwinter some of these goldfish varieties outside and have not had success during the more severe winters. Success can be achieved when the winters are milder and/or supplemental heat is used. But it is a gamble to risk these valuable fish in such an attempt. Moving them out of the brutality of winter and into an indoor situation is a necessary step.

**Tropical fish need to be moved inside before the water temperature goes below 65°F.** Any colder and a lot of them will die – they simply cannot take it. All of our more hardy cold water fish can be moved at any time before the pond develops permanent ice. This is what I call “freeze-up.”

Moving the fish inside can be very hard on the fish, even to the point of losing them if not done right. Before the fish are caught, have the indoor pond ready for the fish transfer. If it is possible, move a portion of the outdoor pond water into the inside pond. Ideally, 20 to 50% of the volume of the inside pond should consist of water from the outdoor pond. This is not absolutely necessary, but it is less stressful for your fish if it can be done. Usually the water temperatures that the fish are in while outside will be colder than the water they are going into. So, the process of acclimating them to the indoor pond water’s temperature is critical and should be done **slowly**. I like to do this over a period of several hours if the temperature difference is large. If the difference is less than 10 to 15°F, then an acclimation time of only an hour or so should be sufficient.

This structure is built over a pond in the fall to provide protection from the winter winds and snows. Under this greenhouse the temperature of this pond stays about 50°F in midwinter. Most people will not want to go to this much expense and effort to overwinter their fish.

*Photo by Larry Thompson.*
The process of acclimating fish to an inside pond (tub) is shown here. Small hardy goldfish have been placed in a 5-gallon bucket in their outdoor pond water. Aeration has been added as well as a glass cover to keep the fish from jumping out. Indoor pond water is added in 15-minute increments in increasing amounts to fully acclimate them to the indoor water temperature and chemistry.

When acclimating the fish, it is important to acclimate them to the water chemistry in addition to temperature. To do this, start by placing the fish in a container to move them inside. Have this container filled with just enough of their outdoor pond water to allow for more water additions. Then, add 10% indoor pond water to the transfer container containing the fish, wait 15 minutes and then add another 20%, wait another 15 minutes and so on, gradually increasing the amount of indoor pond water each time. These wait periods are longer when the temperature difference is large. This container should be aerated and covered during this process.

Outdoor fish are used to swimming in a much larger pond and, when restricted to a smaller container or pond, they will jump, with possible tragic consequences. So, covering the transfer container is important during the acclimation process, and covering the actual indoor pond with a jump-proof type of cover is equally important. Choose a type of cover that will keep a fish in the container and take a fish hitting it without becoming dislodged. Sheets of flexible plastic or tarps are examples of covers that are not always jump proof and should not be used. A fish can flip those off. Use heavy welded wire, hardware cloth (wire), Plexiglas, or glass. Even with these types of covers you may add weight on top of them to insure that they stay in place even if a large fish hits it, attempting to jump out.

The size of the indoor pond is always a critical factor in fish survival – usually, the bigger the better. The larger volume allows for more of a fish waste “sink” before a water change needs to be done. Large fish also need a correspondingly larger container or pond. Large koi need to be able to easily turn around in their pond. Too small of a container can risk the health of your fish.

With hardy fish, attempt to maintain the indoor pond water as cool as possible without the water freezing. An attached garage or a cool basement is usually a good choice. If the fish are displayed, upstairs, in the living quarters, then the pond/aquarium will be warmer, which is fine. However, the warmer water dictates a couple of additional requirements. An even larger container should be provided, because the fish will be eating more and therefore excreting more. Again, larger volume allows more of a fish waste sink. Even with a larger container, it is vital that more water changes be made.

Aeration and circulation is critical to the health of the fish in any pond, but it is especially true for indoor ponds. The
amount of biological filtration you provide depends on how much the fish are fed, therefore more fish waste is produced. These bio filters will break down the fish waste into relatively harmless substances. Sponge filters of some sort work well and a pond or tank should have a bare bottom for ease of cleaning. This bare bottom allows one to see any uneaten food that has sunk to the bottom. It can then be easily removed. Uneaten food is always a fish killer if in great enough quantity.

Water changes will need to be made in any indoor pond situation. The preferred amount of water to change at any one time is 20% of the volume of the pond. Of course, the make-up (replacement) water will need to have the chlorine removed. The more the fish are fed, the more water changes will be needed to remove accumulating substances. Contaminates still build up in the water column even with the right filters. If the indoor pond is kept at 50°F or less, then feeding is not necessary. With this cooler situation, water changes once every month or two will be all that is necessary.

Warmer water means a water change of at least 20% every two to three weeks.

The process of moving the fish back into the outside pond in the spring is somewhat simpler than moving them inside. It is the time to be thinking of moving hardy fish back to their outdoor pond when the spring thaw occurs. Even if it freezes at night the light ice that is formed will be gone in a few days. This light ice will not be harmful to the fish. So, move them early in the spring.

However, with most tropical fish wait to move them outside when water temperatures are above 65 to 70°F. As in the fall, take your time acclimating the fish, especially if there is a large temperature difference. Again, acclimate them to the water chemistry as well as water temperature.

In areas where winters can get really cold, bringing fish inside when the weather turns nasty means they will never know how brutal winters can be. Keeping the indoor pond cool, making adequate water changes, and acclimating them correctly are all important for the healthy survival of your fish.

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About the Author

Jamie Beyer – The very popular subject of adding water features to a garden is one that Jamie Beyer brings a lot of knowledge and enthusiasm to. Jamie is a Lifetime Master Gardener from the Ames/Boone area and is founder and President of the Central Iowa Water Garden Association. Water gardening has been a passion of Jamie’s for over 45 years and, currently, he has three 10,000 gallon ponds and one 27,000 pond which contains many kinds of water plants and fish.

He combines this experience with his Master’s Degree in Fish and Wildlife Biology to become uniquely qualified to be one of the Midwest’s foremost experts on the subject. His broad background of fisheries, dynamics of water, wildlife ecology, and horticulture gives him impressive credentials.

Jamie frequently speaks and writes on all aspects of water features and water gardening to gardeners in the Midwest. In addition, he also has a consulting/installation business, called Midwest Waterscapes, where he works as a water garden, fountain and pond consultant/installer.

Jamie has considerable experience installing ponds, diagnosing water garden problems, teaching classes and helping do-it-yourselfers, do it right. Since the late 80’s, he has been involved with the design and installation of over 700 water gardens and features.

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

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Jake Langeslag – Aqua Eden – Faribault, Minnesota

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Hikari Utsuri variety are koi like Kin Showa, Kin Ki Utsuri, Kin Hi Utsuri, Gin Shiro Utsuri. What is common here is that they are all metallic versions of Utsuri varieties. **Hikari means metallic.** Utsuri varieties are black based varieties like Showa, Hi Utsuri, Ki Utsuri and Shiro Utsuri.

Because, unlike Gosanke (Kohaku, Sanke and Showa), Hikari Utsuri varieties are not as popular, there are not many breeders. This means it is more difficult to obtain high quality ones in this variety.

In appreciation of this koi variety, we take body conformation and skin quality as given. The key points for each variety that you need to look for are these attributes -

1. Sheen
2. Pattern of Each Variety

**Sheen**

When you look at the name of “Koi,” what comes first is always more important than the following. Let’s take an example of Ginrin Kohaku. Ginrin Kohaku is a red and white koi (Kohaku) with diamond scales (*ginrin*). When you have an excellent Kohaku pattern koi with poor *ginrin* and a poor Kohaku pattern with excellent *ginrin*, a poor patterned Kohaku with superior *ginrin* will win. It is because the *ginrin* feature/attribute is more important than Kohaku feature. This is why we call this koi variety Ginrin Kohaku, not Kohaku Ginrin.
The same principle applies to Hikari Utsuri. It is a koi with two features: “Hikari = metallic” and “Utsuri = black based koi.” The metallic feature outweighs the feature of Utsuri variety. Therefore, the degree of the sheen is the most important key factor in the appreciation of Hikari Utsuri.

Then, how can you tell the quality of sheen? The face and the pectoral fins are the places to look at. These two areas show the innate sheen quality of the koi the most. Please look for clean and shiny face and pectoral fins.

**Pattern of Each Variety**

To understand this point, you need to understand the appreciation of Utsuri varieties such as Showa, Shiro Utsuri, Hi Utsuri and Ki Utsuri. Discussing Utsuri varieties alone could be a completely separate article, but basically it is the balance of the color combination.

- In Showa, we would like to see three colors on every part of the body.
- In Shiro Utsuri, balance of the *sumi* (black) pattern on the white skin is critical.
- In the cases of Hi Utsuri and Ki Utsuri it is the same except that they have different ground colors like red and yellow.

One important characteristics of the Utsuri variety is the presence of a *menware* pattern (*sumi* pattern that divides the face). A *menware* pattern is not a must but definitely a big plus if the koi has it.

There are two more things you need to know about pattern of Hikari Utsuri. In Hikari Utsuri, the redder it is, the higher the value. When you look at Kin Showa, for example, some have more orange *hi* and others have redder *hi*. In general, redder *hi* is more desirable and wins at koi shows. Thus, redder Kin Showa is usually priced higher.

It is important to know the fact that *sumi* and sheen do not get along. When you see strong *sumi*, the ground skin is not shiny most of the time and vice versa. When you see excellent sheen, the *sumi* is weak most of the time. In other words, if you do see nice sheen and *sumi* on the same body at your supplier, even if the pattern may not be the greatest (remember pattern is not the first priority), you should get it right away before another trained eye dealer gets it. And you should put a higher value for this koi.

Marketing Hikari Utsuri could be easy or difficult. Because it is a shiny koi, it looks very attractive in display ponds. They catch peoples attention and they may want to buy them. Probably the difficult part is not the selling but rather the buying. As far as Japanese Koi are concerned, because there are not many breeders and also because it is more difficult to breed these varieties than non-metallic versions, it is not easy to find
quality Hikari Utsuri. So if your supplier has them in stock, I recommend you should get as many as possible as quickly as possible.

In addition to the selling part, having regular Utsuri varieties on the side may help you to explain Hikari Utsuri more easily. For example, if you want to sell Kin Showa, have Showa on the side so that customers can visualize that this is a metallic version of the koi. You can also explain how difficult and rare it is to breed such a nice Kin Showa because breeders have to add an extra feature (“sheen”) to the body of the Showa.

There are several breeders known for quality Hikari Utsuri. They are Miyaishi Koi Farm, Miyatora Koi Farm, Aoki Koi Farm, Iwashita Koi Farm and Marusaka Koi Farm. 

Mr Hoshino (left) from Yamanaka Oya Koi Farm with Taro Kodama, Kodama Koi Farm. Eagerly looking at koi behind them are ZNA Koi Judges (US) Grant and Penny Patton.

### About the Author

Taro Kodama is President of Kodama Koi Farm. It is the largest importer and distributor of quality Japanese Koi in the US. With locations in Japan, Hawaii and New Jersey, Kodama Koi Farm carries 35,000+ Japanese Koi from the top breeders in Japan. Taro Kodama, along with his father, Mamoru Kodama, provide not only winning show Koi, they also conduct many Koi seminars.

### Japanese Koi Breeders

Taro recommends you read “KOISHI – Koi Breeders” to understand more about the breeders mentioned in this article and many more.

The book was written by Taro’s father Mr. Mamoru Kodama. Mr. Kodama spent over 20 years visiting Koi Breeders throughout Japan.

Order this paperback book with over 200 pages of information. It comes with a hard case cover for safe keeping. Start learning about these Koi Breeders and Koi Farms today.

KOISHI is available on Amazon.com

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The Product of the Year 2012 Challenge yielded two outstanding winners, one in each major category — Pond Equipment and Pond Product. Both products are new and unique additions to the industry.

**Pond Equipment** went to *The Helix Pond Skimmer*, developed by The Pond Digger, Eric Triplett. He had wanted to see a new skimmer for the pond industry for a long time. Finally, with his years of accumulated experience installing, working with, and understanding how skimmers work, he was determined to find a way to create a new design.

**Pond Product** was given to *Cavoy Vaccine* distributed by Novartis Animal Health. The Koi Herpes Virus (KHV) outbreaks have caused thousands of koi deaths in the USA. With the Cavoy vaccination, there is now a preventive option to reduce the risk of the disease. This vaccine is approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

We would like to thank all the people who nominated products online on our website. There were over a hundred different products nominated.

Congratulations to this year’s Product of the Year winners.
Product of the Year - Pond Equipment

Helix Pond Skimmer by The Pond Digger

Product of the Year - Pond Product

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The International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society (IWGS) is proud to announce the 2012 winners of the 15th Annual New Waterlily Competition. Waterlily hybrids were grown out and photographed at the Denver Botanic Gardens in Denver, CO under the supervision of aquatic horticulturist, Tamara Kilbane. Entries from around the world were judged from September 14 – 20, 2012 by an international panel of aquatic plant experts. In addition, online and on-site voting was open to the public for People’s Choice Awards.

This year’s winners include:

• **Best New Waterlily: Nymphaea**
  ’Tropic Punch’ by Florida Aquatic Nurseries, USA

• **2nd Best New Waterlily: Nymphaea**
  ’Kiss the Sky’ by Mike Giles, USA

• **Placed Hardy Waterlily: Nymphaea**
  ’Manee Red’ by Pairat Songpanich, Thailand

• **2nd Place Hardy Waterlily: Nymphaea**
  ’Pink Pom Pom’ by Tony Moore, USA
Results of the People's Choice Awards include:

• 1st Place Hardy Waterlily: *Nymphaea* ‘Pink Pom Pom’
  by Tony Moore, USA

• 2nd Place Hardy Waterlily: *Nymphaea* ‘Razzberry’ by
  Tony Moore, USA

• 1st Place Tropical Waterlily: Unnamed by Lonestar
  Aquatic Nursery, USA

• 2nd Place Tropical Waterlily: *Nymphaea* ‘Tropic Punch’
  by Florida Aquatic Nurseries, USA

• 1st Place Intersubgeneric Waterlily: *Nymphaea*
  ‘Florida Aquatic Nurseries’ Deep Purple’ by Florida
  Aquatic Nurseries, USA

• 2nd Place Intersubgeneric Waterlily: *Nymphaea* ‘Kiss
  the Sky’ by Mike Giles, USA

This year’s international panel of judges consisted of James
Allison of Aquapic Solutions, Craig Pressnell of Luster Aquatic
Nurseries, Tim Jennings of Longwood Botanical Gardens,
Jim Purcell of Oregon Aquatics, Kelly Billing of Maryland
Aquatic Nurseries, Stu Schuck of Charleston Aquatic Nurseries,
2nd Place Tropical Waterlily:
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Deb Spencer of Water’s Edge, Dave Brigante of Hughes Water Gardens, and Danny Benjamin of Hazorea Aquatics.

To view all photos of the New Waterlily Competition winners or to learn more about the International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society, log onto www.iwgs.org, email info@iwgs.org, or call 540-337-4507.

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It’s inevitable that you will receive many calls, every pond season, from customers concerning a pond leak. You need to have a plan on how you will manage these types of inquiries to help you and your new customer reach success. This article is not about the steps it takes to find a leak but rather how to respond to a customer with a pond leak.

When a customer has a pond leak, they will usually ask you to come out and find the leak in their pond and give them a free estimate on fixing it. It can take many hours just to pinpoint a leak in a pond, so obviously this is not the approach you should be using. In fact, finding a leak is the time consuming part; repairing it is usually easy. Instead, you should start by asking several questions over the phone to get a better understanding of their pond system and potential leak.

While speaking with them, explain that the leak needs to be narrowed down prior to your visit. After determining a pond’s parameters you may ask the customer to turn pumps and/or filters off for a day while keeping an air pump or secondary smaller filter running. (Fish should not be fed with the filters off.) Then check the water level to start the process. This procedure will help determine if the leak is in the stream or the pond and how fast the pond is losing water.

After this initial discussion, email the customer your pond leak-troubleshooting guide. While they are working on taking the water measurements, they will be able to review your other pond leak troubleshooting steps along with your contact information that is in the email. The email will set you apart from other contractors that just give them confusing advice over the phone. In a week, follow up with the customer to see how it’s going.

It’s important for you to also state the price of the service call and initial leak assessment as part of your first phone conversation. As mentioned earlier, many customers may expect this service to be free. This service fee can easily be worked into the phone conversation. It will help you qualify the customer and help the customer justify in their own mind how big of a leak problem they really have. Let them know your number one priority is to save them money. This priority begins when the customer starts on the pond leak guide themselves, and then when they get to a certain step, you will visit their pond to troubleshoot the leak further if needed.

Visits should be billed at your hourly rate plus any service call fees, each and every time you visit the pond to try and find the leak. You should always charge by the hour for your time for pond leaks rather than having them be a project or estimate based pricing. If you are unsuccessful in finding the leak during the first visit, ask the customer how many more hours they would like you to put into finding the leak.

Easy enough, right? Answering a quick email or taking an update phone call from a customer with a leak is much easier than driving back and forth to the pond location every few days to try and find the leak.

**Two other tips** –

- An air pump is the most overlooked piece of equipment that any pond owner should have. Using one during leak troubleshooting keeps the water circulating and helps keep the oxygen levels elevated.
- During the fall or early spring is a great time to troubleshoot pond leaks because the water is cooler, holding more oxygen, and the pond fish are less active and eating less.

Pond leaks are a good way to connect with new customers in your area, so have a process and a plan in place on what to do when you receive that phone call about a pond leak.

It is your opportunity to demonstrate how you do customer service and gain a new loyal customer.

**About the Author**

Jeff Krenner has over 17 years experience in the pond and aquarium fish trade. He installed his first pond at the age of 16 when his home aquariums were no longer large enough to contain his aquarium fish hobby. Most recently, Jeff has worked at four large public aquariums nationwide working with fish, filtration installation and animal transports. Jeff is currently a certified pond contractor with Paradise Ponds and Waterfalls in Atlanta, GA.
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by John Olson
Graystone Industry

Authors Note: As a testament to the contentious nature of this topic it should be noted that over a dozen people were interviewed for this article and only a handful gave permission to use their name or company. More than a dozen others refused comment, which, I believe, is a first for the pond industry. It is not the intention of this article to steer the reader to any conclusion. In fact the information obtained and viewpoints of members of our industry are fairly evenly divided. Both sides make extremely valid points and the readers are challenged to draw their own conclusions.

What Exactly is MAP?

MAP (Minimum Advertised Pricing) is one of the most confusing and controversial issues in the pond and water feature industry. When a manufacturer sets a MAP policy it should not be confused with a mandated selling price. US Anti Trust laws prohibit any manufacturer from setting a fixed retail-selling price with their dealers. The policy instead establishes the minimum price the products can be advertised to the consumer. For example: A pond skimmer may have a MSRP (Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price) of $199.99 but the MAP price may be set at 10%-30% off that price. At a 20% off MAP policy this same item may now be advertised for sale at no lower than $159.99. Pond industry MAP policies looked at for this article are all structured in a “percentage off” format although it is understood that some companies may employ a policy of MAP=MSRP. Each company reviewed has different restrictions and responsibilities that sellers must abide by.

Advertising typically covers, but is not limited to, newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, web sites, and online shopping sites such as Amazon and Ebay. The actual selling price is determined by agreement between the buyer and the retailer but any published price lower than MAP for the item is not allowed.

A Brief History of MAP

MAP policies have been in place in the retail world for many years. The MAP policies existed in many forms but often manufacturers with these policies were hesitant to enforce them due to possible violations of Section 1 of the Sherman Anti Trust Law of 1890 or the 1914 Federal Trade Commission Act, which established the FTC entity. In a landmark Supreme Court Case in June 2007 (Leegin Creative Leather Products Inc. vs. PSKS, Inc.) a divided court overturned 96 years of established case law pertaining to pricing structure which was established by precedent in (Dr. Miles Medical Co. v. John D. Park & Sons Co., 220 U.S. 373 in 1911).

The 2007 Supreme Court decision did not automatically make price maintenance or Minimum Advertised Pricing legal but it did ensure that future cases would be established by the “Rule of Reason.” This means that lawsuits and FTC violations would be judged individually to determine if MAP pricing policies stifled competition or placed an undue burden on the consumer. It should be noted that dissenting Supreme Court Justices felt that reversal of this long established ruling would impact consumers by as much as $1000 per year per family.

Over the last 5 years Attorneys General and state legislators for several states including Maryland, New York, and California have moved forward to curtail the pricing restrictions of the Supreme Court ruling with mixed results. Pending court cases and legislation in consideration now may once again change the landscape of this already confusing issue.

Why MAP Programs?

One may wonder why manufacturers would establish and enforce MAP pricing. On the surface one would assume that the lower the selling price the more units are sold and the more profit a manufacturer would receive. In reality the issue is far more complex that this. If a product is sold too cheaply it can be perceived as having little quality. Popular items that are sold without MAP pricing can also be reduced to a commodity.
status. This means that the product is carried, not as a valued addition to a retailers offerings, but simply as an unprofitable item that the store is expected to have in stock. In a grocery store that would be milk, bread, and bananas. In the pond industry you can easily make a case for EPDM pond liner being a commodity. To illustrate the point lets consider that 8-10 years ago retail stores and distributors would buy 45 mil EPDM pond liner for 25-35 cents a square foot and would retail for as much as a $1.25 per square foot. Today it is easy to see the problem with retail stores paying between 64 to 70 cents a square foot while pricing was as low as 51 cents a square foot on an extremely popular web site as of late September.

With the advent of the internet, shopping prices on almost all goods have spiraled downward while costs and expenses have continued to climb. These two factors are among the top reasons pond retail stores and contractors are facing an unprecedented decline of profitability. With declining sales and profits many feel that the entire retail sector of our industry is threatened and have encouraged manufacturers to set up and enforce MAP policies.

Water feature manufacturers have several reasons to establish a minimum advertised price for their products. These include:

1. Preserving the perceived value of their brand name;
2. Maintaining a profitable channel for distributors, retailers, and installers;
3. Prevent retailers from dropping items from inventory that otherwise would have low margins;
4. The higher prices allow for the inclusion of benefits such as superior customer service and extended warranties; and
5. Controls internet resellers and levels the playing field with brick and mortar stores (stores with physical locations).

**Where the Controversy Begins**

While it is clear that MAP pricing can be a tool of profitability for the pond industry there are those who strongly oppose it. Many who are against MAP pricing are internet retailers but some are distributors, brick and mortar stores, and even manufacturers. Reasons for opposition to MAP often include:

1. It violates the free market principals our country was founded on;
2. MAP is unenforceable and the violators reap added sales and profits;
3. It artificially inflates the prices to consumers;
4. Destroys market by encouraging importation of cheaper versions; and
5. Destroys competition as small retailers cannot compete with advertising budgets of larger companies.

It is with a certain irony that each side's viewpoints are valid and of great concern. Let's examine some of these pros and cons in greater detail.

**Preserves the Value of Brand Name – OR – Encourages Cheaper Version Imports**

**PRO:** To most manufacturers their brand name is critical to their success in the industry. Outside of the pond world we easily identify premium brands like Sears Craftsman tools, Maytag appliances, or Kraft Cheese. In our industry branding is just as important. Manufacturers such as Atlantic Water Gardens, Aquascapes, EasyPro, and others spend huge sums of money in promoting their brand and their products. The establishment of MAP pricing allows these branded products to be viewed by the public as premier and desirable items. James Lavery of Atlantic Water Gardens states, “Atlantic has made a considerable investment of time and money into its Big Bahama line of products. We expect these products to be sold at a premium to the consumer and do not want them confused with retail grade products.”

**CON:** Of the many products sold in today's pond market a great deal are imported from overseas. Most pumps, halogen and LED lighting, foggers, and tubing are imported. Pond pumps in particular are readily available from a myriad of Asian companies to any business with enough capital to import a container full. With many manufacturers offering “Brand” versions of the same pump and keeping the advertised prices
high it has opened the door to a flood of cheaper versions in the market. For example, the same 5000 GPH asynchronous pump is offered under at least 4 name brands with varying MAP prices ranging from $294 to $409. This same pump imported in a no name brand is offered online at $129. A typical retail store or online dealer may feel lucky if they sell 1 or 2 of the name brand versions a month but the cheaper generic model sells over 60 units a month during the season. As retail store owner “J.L.” puts it, “I would love to sell 60 of anything a month” He adds, “With all the cheap knockoffs on the market it’s hard for me to convince a customer to spend 2-3 times the money for the same type pump.” This type of offering is increasing in frequency and the sellers who are flooding the market with these pond products have no ties to the Water Garden Industry.

Free Market Principals – OR –
Anti American Lack of Competition

**PRO:** Backers of MAP policies are quick to point out that retailers are able to sell at any price they choose. That right is protected by Federal law and the FTC. Only the advertising must be maintained at a certain price. What price the buyer and seller negotiate is their own business. Manufacturers initiate MAP policies to promote competition and a level playing field between internet sellers and brick and mortar stores. These policies give everyone an equal chance and the businesses that succeed are those with the best customer service, motivation, and business sense. Product distributor “E.T.” once summed it up neatly with “You need to spread the wealth!”

**CON:** Opponents to MAP policies are adamant that individual business owners, not some manufacturer, must decide how they run their business. They feel strongly that MAP is an affront to their rights as a US citizen and believe that everyone should succeed or fail according to their abilities. They no more support MAP than they do the government bailout of banks and businesses. The majority of opponents to MAP interviewed for this article felt that the Federal government has enough control over our lives and they do not want pond supply manufacturers dictating what they can and cannot do. “P.G.,” an internet reseller, advised, “MAP Pricing, like Communism, looks good on paper but is horrible in practice.”

Pond installer “M.T.” added, “That’s not what this country was founded on. Pond people need to stop making excuses and learn how to run their businesses profitably.”

Controls Internet Resellers – OR – Is Unenforceable

**PRO:** Everyone pretty much agrees that in the pond industry, MAP pricing rose primarily to face the onslaught of internet price cutting. Online sellers of products were unfamiliar with the many ways to draw customers to their web sites and unknowingly assumed price was the only way to attract more sales. Once other sellers saw companies with lower prices they adjusted their price even lower to stay competitive. A race to the lowest possible price was begun and all sellers lost profits in the ensuing mayhem. Companies like Ebay and Amazon worsened the problem by encouraging buyers to search for listings by the lowest price offered.

MAP pricing, in the pond industry, was developed primarily to bring order to the chaos and ensure that all businesses could remain profitable. MAP policies have changed over the last few years as both sellers and consumers have evolved. Jeff Payton of Aquascapes, Inc., discussed how their company has changed MAP pricing to reflect an evolving market, “Back in 2007 the first Aquascape MAP price policy was written specifically for internet drop ship customers in mind. That policy did not reflect today’s market with many brick and mortar stores also having an internet presence.” Jeff went on to say, “Aquascapes has recently introduced what we think is the most comprehensive MAP policy in the industry today. It has already eliminated over 95% of MAP violations and we expect the remaining issues to be resolved soon.”

Most physical store locations agree with manufacturers. They feel that their stores cannot compete on price with internet sellers and are very happy to see policies in place to restrict low advertised pricing.

**CON:** Time will tell if the recently released Aquascape MAP price policy will be the sorely needed solution to across-the-board profitability. Some naysayers feel that it will be just another one of the many policies that debut to great fanfare then quickly fade away as reality sets in. Many internet sellers have long been a fan of the idea of MAP policy while lamenting the ill effects of the poorly administered existing policies they view as unenforceable. No one interviewed for this article stated that they wanted to make LESS money. The problem they indicate with existing MAP policies is that they favor the cheaters.

The theory is that if a manufacturer has a MAP policy in place and they have 90% off all sellers following it then the 10% who violate the policy have a unique competitive advantage and can gain the lion’s share of the market. Distributor and internet retailer “E.G” notes, “Just take a particular skimmer for example. We used to sell 30-40 a month of this one unit until the manufacturer instituted MAP price on it. We followed MAP price and now we sell 2-3 units a month! Where did those sales go?’ Answering the question, “E.G” continues, “I lost all my sales to other businesses who decided not to follow the MAP price. You can look on the internet and in seconds find a dozen people selling it for less.”

An internet seller, “B.C.,” states, “I can tell when a manufacturer finally gets around to enforcing MAP policy. I see my sales pick up for a week or two until those who were violating it before start doing it again.” He adds, “My entire business and
Higher Prices Allow Benefits and Service — OR — Price Gouging Customers

**PRO:** Few people would argue that a typical in store experience can provide a pond customer with detailed information about the product and a sense of comfort about the merchant who supplied it. In our industry, service is king and physical stores have the best chance to bestow product knowledge upon the consumer and guide them towards the purchase of the products that are best for their application. This level of high customer service comes with added labor costs— something few internet sellers have to contend with. In order to provide excellent customer service to the consumer and ensure someone is there for them when things go wrong a higher price must be charged for the product. As Keith Steele of Savio Engineering puts it, “Our retailers are selling a service, not just a product. Enforcing MAP policy is a constant battle that we undertake to allow our retailers to make a suitable profit for the services they provide.”

Higher prices allow for better service and speedy resolutions to warranty issues. MAP pricing helps stabilize things so that retail stores can continue to perform a level of service that is simply not available on the internet. James Lavery of Atlantic Water Gardens points out, “Store owners must sell on service. Customers looking for price only are sure to find it somewhere. Our dealer’s goal should be to win the sale by exceeding the customer’s expectations on service and reliability.” Store owner “R.M” said, “Those internet guys have zero overhead and can afford to sell cheap. None of them can match our service and relationship with our customer. Running a real store costs money and that means a higher price to the consumer.”

my family are dependant upon whether or not some faceless employee at the manufacturer will actually be doing their job.”

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Contractor “F.C.” states, “I tell customers that I will match an internet price when they call my service! If that internet company will come out here and install the pump, if they will come back if there is a problem, if they will be there to replace it for you immediately if it fails AND they can offer you that low a price then that is who you should buy it from.” Another solution “F.C.” suggests is, “Contractors should not be installing consumer purchases or at the very least they should clearly state they will not warranty or replace them if they fail.”

**CON:** No one likes to pay too much for an item. Most people now search online for cars and know exactly how much they will pay before they head to the dealer. At Christmas and birthdays consumers go online to find the right gifts at the lowest possible prices. People certainly don’t choose to buy a $100 gift from one merchant when another is offering the exact same item at $80. In this economic climate we certainly understand the desire of people to save every cent possible. After all, most of us know that corner near us that has 3 different gas stations. Take a look next time at the one with the lowest posted price and notice how many more customers they have compared to the others.

If we, as pond industry professionals, don’t like to pay any more than we have to for our daily purchases, how is it that we feel so strongly about keeping the prices as high as possible for the pond products we sell? Is a brand name pump really worth $200 more than the same pump in a generic box? A pump that costs $20-30 to produce can end up under MAP price with a retail of more than $300.

As for sellers with zero overhead there is a great many people who would disagree with that. One internet seller who did not wish to be named even by initials indicated, “My websites alone cost me $100-$300 per page and I have about nearly 1000 pages on line. Advertising to bring people to the sites is even more. Last year my overhead was higher than $400,000 not counting products. How many stores do you know who have that kind of investment?” Internet seller “P.G.” also has a different view. “I am so sick of uninformed pond store people crying that I have zero overhead.” He continues, “Have you paid for a web page lately? Do you have any idea how much it costs to build, advertise, and maintain a web site in a way that will provide a living to your family?” I spend tens of thousands of dollars a year just to stay online. I would like to see how much that guy with the little store on the corner of his yard spends each year.”

**Maintains an Even Playing Field – OR – Gives Large Companies the Advantage**

**PRO:** Map pricing evens the field for all sellers. It keeps internet companies from lowering prices where physical stores cannot compete. MAP allows distributors, retailers, and installers to make profit on the sale of items. This keeps everyone employed, prevents the commoditization of products, and keeps the pond industry growing and profitable for future generations.

**CON:** Map pricing favors big business. Chain stores, distributors who retail, and garden stores with pond sections all have more advertising power than independent stores and smaller internet sellers. If products are all advertised at the same price then consumers will buy from companies who have the biggest advertising budget and the most exposure. MAP policy defeats its own purpose and takes sales from the small guys and hands them directly to larger companies.

**Enforcing MAP Policy**

As mentioned, many manufacturers chose not to be interviewed for this article. Those who did agree readily admit that MAP policy enforcement has been hit and miss in the past but they are trying harder. Keith Steele from Savio explains, “We work constantly on MAP enforcement. We are working with Amazon right now on the use of our images and property rights.” James Lavery contends, “I work on MAP every moment I possibly can. Our company is always looking at different ways to bring and keep sellers in compliance.” Anthony Marola of Aquascape Designs indicates, “With our new MAP policy I spend about an hour a day monitoring the web. When we identify a violation of our policy I spend extra time making sure the sellers are aware of policy and to help bring them back up to compliance.”

**PRO:** If Aquascapes is correct and the research they did both in and out of the pond industry has resulted in an effective MAP policy that will continue to be abided by, then other manufacturers may wish to emulate. In studying the MAP policies of various companies one can easily identify the good intentions of
the manufacturers. Enforcing MAP is a challenging task and some companies do better than others. Certain computer programs are available and are being implemented to crawl the millions of pond web site pages and help identify MAP violations. Diligence on the part of the manufacturer is key to the success of these programs. Jeff Payton, of Aquascapes suggests, “It is the responsibility of the manufacturer, not the distributor, to monitor and enforce MAP policy. We have the resources to do this more effectively.”

**CON:** Enforcement of many MAP policies is sporadic at best and at worst is ruining honorable companies that follow the rules while rewarding those that don’t. Many enforcement policies rely upon distributors, retailers, and internet resellers to report violations to the manufacturers. Some manufacturers dictate to their customers that they must police their customers. Many distributors and retailers find this distasteful and impractical. A distributor may have hundreds of customers and if they carry multiple lines of pond products they may have a thousand or more items covered by various MAP policies. It is absurd to think that they have the time and resources to constantly check pricing on 100,000 potential issues. As distributor and retailer “E.O.” puts it, “I could not even tell you more than a dozen of the web sites owned by my customers. I certainly cannot tell you what prices they are selling at. I have neither the time nor will to babysit them.”

**Conclusion**

The amount of information on MAP policies and theory is overwhelming in its totality and is far too much for any one article. We have, however, explored many points and counterpoints of the opposing views about MAP. Like in politics, there are many different opinions and people often feel very strongly
that theirs is the correct one. Given the polarizing views of this subject it is important to remember that people on each side approach the topic from their own perspective. The views expressed by the people and companies above were given readily with the best interest of the pond community in mind. Our industry, while being small compared to some, is the business in which we have chosen to dedicate our lives. It is the business that we feed our families by and it is the business that we must nurture and grow so that future generations can follow in our footsteps. MAP pricing may or may not be the best answer to our current concerns. The complexity of today’s retail environment is in an ever changing flux. What works and sells today may be obsolete by next season. We, as an industry, must keep moving forward and work together towards best practices that will ensure our success now, and in the future.

John Olson – Former President IPPCA - www.ippca.com

Thank you to the many people I interviewed for this article -

James Lavery
Inside Sales Manager
Atlantic Water Gardens

Anthony Marola
Customer Care Manager
Aquascape Designs

Jeff Payton
Executive Vice President
Aquascape, Inc.

Keith Steele
Owner
Savio Engineering

and the dozen people who would only talk to me anonymously.

About the Author

John Olson
is the CEO of Graystone Industries and an avid alligator wrestler. Graystone is a distributor for over a dozen brands of quality pond supplies with warehouse and retail locations in GA and NC as well as an Internet store at www.graystonecreations.com.

John resides at Rosemont Estate in north Georgia with his wife and two children. When not riding go carts, gold mining, or trout fishing with the children, John helps other businesses in achieving their true potential.

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INFO-TANZA has Great Event in Orlando

Cindy Graham
POND Trade Magazine

It’s a shame if you did not make it to Florida last year. For those in attendance there was so much to do! The event started off Wednesday with two-dozen contractions converging for the 7th Annual Ponditat™ for Humanity pond build (see article in next issue). On Friday there was a field trip to Blackwater Creek Koi Farm and we ended the day with a magnificent experience at a Manatee Refuge.

Then there were a dozen plus seminars to fill your head with ideas and to help you with your business - great speakers sharing their vast knowledge on topics you can use everyday. Since there were two seminars going at any one time, it was often very difficult to decide which one to attend. A big “Thank you” goes to every speaker.

A very delicious banquet happened on Sunday night. Awards were given like the IPPCA 5-Star Contractor Award, sponsored by EasyPro Pond Products. This year’s award was presented to Jeff Krenner - congratulations!

Other awards were Top Gun and IPPCA’s first Diamond Test graduates. Then POND Trade Magazine presented the winners of Product of the Year. Eric Triplett’s new skimmer was one and he was present to give an impromptu overview. Thanks Eric for sharing. (See more on page 26.)

INFO-TANZA was held in conjunction with the IA Show. There were many booths to see new products or maybe products that you just never knew about. It is events like this where you learn so much.

Enjoy the pictures and we hope you will become inspired to attend this year!

For more information about IPPCA host of INFO-TANZA see their website www.ippca.com or better yet give them a call to see how you can get involved and benefit from belonging to IPPCA the Pond and Waterscape Industry Trade Association at 770/592-9790.
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Basic Business Entities Explained

The Tax Question

For tax purposes, the main forms of business enterprise are the regular, so-called ‘C’ Corporation, it’s pass-through small business cousin, the ‘S’ Corporation, a partnership, limited liability companies (LLCs) or a sole proprietorship. Of all business entities, however, it is the so-called regular or ‘C’ Corporation that takes the biggest tax bite.

The earnings of an incorporated garden pond business are actually taxed twice. First a corporate income tax is imposed on the pond supply, construction or maintenance operation’s net earnings and then, after the earnings are distributed to shareholders as dividends, each shareholder must pay taxes on his or her share of the dividends.

Naturally, a corporation can reduce, or even eliminate, its federal income tax liability by distributing its income as salary to shareholder-employees who actually perform valuable services for the corporation. Although this can reduce taxation at the corporate level, those who receive profits from a corporation in exchange for services must pay tax on the amount received since it is considered “salary” for tax purposes. Fortunately, there is some relief available to individual shareholders who currently benefit from the new, lower – and temporary – tax rate on dividends.

This scheme of taxation differs radically from that applied to S Corporations, partnerships, LLCs and sole proprietorships. These entities often referred to as “pass-through” entities, do not pay an entity-level tax on their earnings. Only the owners of these entities are taxed on their share of the entity’s earnings or personally benefit from any losses.

Going it Alone as a Sole Proprietor

The easiest structure is the sole proprietorship which usually involves just one individual owning and operating the pond business. The tax aspects of a sole proprietorship are especially appealing because income and expenses from the business are included on the sole proprietor’s personal income tax return.

Of course, as a sole proprietor, a garden pond professional must also file Schedule SE with Form 1040. Schedule SE is used to calculate how much self-employment tax is owed. And, don’t forget that quarterly payments of estimated taxes are due from self-employed pond professionals.
Naturally, there are a few disadvantages. Selecting the sole proprietorship structure means that the owner or proprietor is solely liable for the operation’s liabilities. As a result, a sole proprietor places his or her own assets at risk, subject to seizure to satisfy a business debt or legal claim.

**What’s a Rich Best Friend for: Partnerships**

If the pond business is to be owned and operated by several individuals, take a close look at partnerships. Partnerships come in two varieties: general partnerships and limited partnerships. In a general partnership, the partners manage the pond supply, construction or maintenance business and assume responsibility for the partnership’s debts and other obligations. A limited partnership has both general and limited partners.

In a limited partnership, the general partner owns and operates the business and assumes liability for the partnership, while the limited partners serve as investors only; they have no control over the operation and are not subject to the same liabilities as the general partners. Obviously, unless many passive investors are involved, limited partnerships are not the best structure to use.

One of the major advantages of a partnership is the tax treatment it enjoys. A partnership does not pay tax on its income but “passes through” all profits or losses to the individual partners. Each partner is required to report profits from the partnership on his or her individual tax return. Even though the partnership pays no income tax, it must complete and file a partnership informational return, Form 1065.

Personal liability is a major concern for many contractors, especially those employing a general partnership. Similar to a sole proprietorship, general partners are personally liable for the partnership’s obligations and debt. Partnerships are also more expensive to establish than sole proprietorships because they require more extensive legal, and accounting services.

**Incorporating but Not Protecting**

Using the corporate structure for a pond supply, construction or maintenance operation is, as mentioned, more complex and expensive than for other types of business entities. The resulting corporation, however, is an independent legal entity, separate from its owners. As such, the corporation must comply with more regulations and tax requirements.

The biggest benefit for the owner of an incorporated business is the liability protection he or she receives. A corporation’s debt is not considered the debt of its owners. Although the courts are increasingly “reaching behind” the corporate structure, for the most part, a corporation’s debt is not considered to be a debt of its owners.

Another plus, is the ability of a corporation to raise money. A corporation can sell its stock, either common or preferred shares, in order to raise funds. Corporations also continue indefinitely, even if one of the shareholders should die, sell his or her shares or becomes disabled.

The corporate structure also comes with a number of downsides. A major one is higher costs. Corporations are formed under state laws, each with their own set of regulations. A corporation must also follow a more complex set of rules and regulations than other entities such as a sole proprietorship or a partnership. And, don’t forget another, major downside: the taxes paid by both the incorporated business and the owner/shareholder when profits are distributed.

**Not Always Small S Corporations**

An S Corporation is merely an incorporated pond business that has chosen to be treated as a partnership for tax purposes.

It offers some appealing tax benefits while still providing its owners with the liability protection of a corporation. The income and losses of an S Corporation is passed through to its shareholders, and included on the shareholder’s personal tax return. As a result, there is just one level of federal tax to pay.

On the downside, S Corporations are subject to many of the same requirements that corporations must follow resulting in higher legal and accounting fees. The S Corporation must also file articles of incorporation; hold directors and shareholders’ meetings; keep corporate minutes; and allow shareholders to vote on major corporate decisions.

Another major difference between a regular corporation and an S Corporation is that S Corporations can only issue one class of stock despite the limit of having up to 100 shareholders. Experts say this can hamper the pond operation’s ability to raise capital.

**No Limits to the LLC**

While S Corporations remain the most-used separate entity for small businesses, the Limited Liability Company, or
LLC, is a fairly recent phenomenon. An LLC is a hybrid entity, bringing together some of the best features of partnerships and corporations.

LLCs were created to provide business owners with the liability protection that corporations enjoy – without the double taxation. The earnings and losses of an LLC pass through to the owners and are included on their personal income tax returns.

Although it sounds similar to an S Corporation, the LLC has no limit on the number of shareholders. In fact, any LLC member or shareholder has a full participatory role in the business’s operation.

Like partnerships, LLCs do not have perpetual life. Some states stipulate that the business must dissolve after 30 or 40 years. Technically, a LLC dissolves when a member dies, quits or retires.

Despite its popularity and attractions, LLCs also have disadvantages. Since an LLC is a relatively new entity, its tax treatment varies by state.

**Decisions, Decisions**

The annual tax return provides one incentive to re-consider the options available to your pond business. Entities with more than one member can elect corporate status on the annual tax returns. Thus, an entity that is a partnership under state laws may choose to be taxed as a “C” Corporation, or as an S Corporation, for federal taxes by using Form 8832 (Entity Classification Election). Unfortunately, under those so-called “check-the-box” regulations entities formed under a state's corporate laws are automatically classified corporations and may not elect to be treated as any other type of entity.

Changing circumstances, changes in the tax laws, and even the success of the pond business might prompt a reassessment of the form the business operates under. It makes sense to ensure you are using the best entity to provide your business – and yourself – with the most benefits and consistently lowest tax bill. To help in this decision-making process, professional advice is strongly recommended.

**About the Author**

Mark Battersby’s 25 years of professional experience in the fields of taxes and finances enable Mr. Battersby to write on unique and topical subjects. Although no reputable professional should ever render specific advice at arm’s length, he does craft unbiased, interesting, informative, and accurate articles. Mr. Battersby currently writes for publications in a variety of fields. His topical columns are syndicated in many publications each week. He also writes columns for trade magazines and has authored four books.

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Atlantic’s Pump Products offer the perfect solution for all water features, large and small. Whether the application calls for Mag Drive or Direct Drive, Axial or Asynchronous, TidalWave pumps deliver the right flow at the right head for the right wattage. Cutting edge design, top quality components and world class support ensure TidalWave delivers years of trouble-free service. Visit [www.atlanticwatergardens.com](http://www.atlanticwatergardens.com) to view all of Atlantic’s TidalWave pumps.
Having the only indoor pond-building classroom that we of Pond Pro Shop, retail division of Unit Liner Co., are aware of has allowed us to offer free classes throughout the season for the last six years. Our classes are well attended and we try to keep each class interesting.

An idea for a pond build for just ladies doing the build came about as I listened to several of our female customers who were having to build their own water features and were looking for ideas. Realizing there might be more than we were aware of who were in the same circumstance, we decided mid-season to offer one of our pond builds to “ladies only.”

After making the decision we invited all the ladies who work in the aquatic departments to join us in this endeavor. We have each been trained on how to build a pond and sell pond products and we had each worked some on ponds of our own; but to build a pond starting from beginning to end had only been theorized or observed.

Once the idea began, we all got more and more excited. We decided to make it a “pink” for girls’ day with balloons and pink pastries, etc. We had pink tee shirts designed with a “Rosie the Riveter”-type lady on the front with the words “dirt don’t hurt.”

We asked through our newsletters and Store requests that ladies pre-register in order for us to know how many might be attending. We put together gift sacks for each attendee just to make it a unique day. Inside each sack was a tee-shirt, pair of pink gloves, note pads, pens, a bottle of water with the “dirt don’t hurt” label, and pond-building instructions. We finally stopped the registering numbers at 60 thinking that with those who had not pre-registered and “just walked in” we could have a very large class.

We took pictures of the event and have used them both on our newsletter and store displays. It has been a very successful event and we hope to do more next year. We hope to get more magazines and newsletters out to the Ladies who want the pond-building experience. If you are interested in doing this, you should contact us.

Left to right – Ashley Gilbreth, Bobbi Martin, Alice Morgan, Jaclyn Morgan, Luanne Mosier, Toshay Gaines, and Leslie Nuttall.
As time neared, we “aquatic ladies” had a practice session to assure ourselves we could do the class without embarrassing anyone. We all became comfortable and assigned “tasks” to different ones, e.g. installing the skimmer and waterfall. Mentoring us was Juan Lopez who usually does the physical part of our pond build classes.

Our in-house computer/camera-guy Kelly Nuttall videoed the process placing it up on a screen for all attendees to better see what was going on. As you can imagine, almost anytime girls get together there is a lot of laughter and fun involved. So we used this to our advantage. We placed a row of chairs “at the back of the classroom” for men only. We placed fans all around the classroom…end of July…hot summer…women…need we say more?

On class day, we had pink balloons throughout, “women-working” signs displayed and plenty of food and drink. We all had our pink “dirt don’t hurt” shirts and pink bandanas around our hair similar to our “Rosie the Riveter.” We had 57 ladies in attendance and a few men.

The hole was dug and all necessary products at the ready. As I talked step by step per our guide, each of the girls grabbed the underlay and liner and installed them. They continued to demonstrate how to install the skimmer, pump, waterfall filter, tubing and the rest of the items needed for building the pond. Yes, they even placed rock and cobblestone in and around the pond. Our ladies are “not afraid of dirt” nor work.

When all was installed, water filled the pond, and pump was started. Cheers arose when “guess what” it worked? After we finished the build, we moved on to a previously “hidden” section to show how to build the same size pond easier and faster.

Again the hole was dug. The girls placed a “Universal Rock” pre-formed very natural looking rock pond and waterfall by simply placing the sections into the hole; installing the pump and tubing; filling with water and turning it on. As the pond was filling with water, the girls placed plants and flowers around the pond, a bench and other décor showing in fact, you truly could complete a pond plus landscaping in just a short amount of time. “Just have a party.” I’m not sure who cheered the loudest, those of us who built the ponds or the observers. At any rate it turned out to be a great day. Fun for all!

We were asked when we have 18 classes a year, 14 of them actual water features, with number of attendees ranging from 20 to 90, why this one was “such a party” including gifts? Our answer was as women, we know that most women like to do things together and make a party out of just being together so we treated this new class a little differently. Of course we always offer snacks of some sort at all our classes, always have handouts and do our best to make each attendee welcome.

Will we do it again next year? It is unknown at this time. There will always be a “special need” for a different class. We will just have to see what surprises come up this year. Keep in touch…we’ll let you know. cS

See this article online for additional pictures.
Atlantic Water Gardens Introduces the AWGFT2 Fountain Light

Atlantic Water Gardens is pleased to introduce the new AWGFT2 Fountain Light.

The new 1.5 watt Fountain Light features a ½” MPT x ¾” insert fitting, a 20’ power cord and outdoor transformer. Its gorgeous warm white glow works perfectly with most fountain applications, and will help you enjoy your fountain deep into the night.

MSRP: $40.00

For further information please contact…
James Chubb, National Sales Manager
Atlantic Water Gardens
1-616-914-9953 • jim@atlanticwatergardens.com
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Redesigned Aspirating Mixer

The redesigned Enterprise Aspirating Mixer by Air-O-Lator Corporation provides a more energy and cost efficient option for aerating and mixing. The retooled unit yields increased airflow, pumpage rate, and thrust, plus it is easier to install. The new advantages are important because, in water treatment, an aspirating mixer must introduce and mix air into the water at a high volume in order to metabolize present aerobic microorganisms.

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Atlantic Water Gardens introduces Color Changing Vases

Atlantic Water Gardens is pleased to present a new concept in illuminated water features – overflowing vases that glow from within! During the day the three sizes create the welcome sights and sounds of dancing water, bubbling up and cascading down their sides – but in the dark, they come alive with light!

Working on the same technology as our Color Changing Colorfalls, these vases radiate in 48 different colors, or in 16 different pre-programmed patterns, with speed and intensity regulated by Remote Control.

Available as single vases 18”, 24” and 32” tall, in sets of three, or as part of a kit with the Oasis Fountain Basin, you are sure to find the right fit for your application.

MSRP: $306.67 - $400.00 for individual vases, $893.33 for a set of three, $527.13 for the Kit w/ Basin and Pump

For further information please contact…
James Chubb, National Sales Manager, Atlantic Water Gardens
1-616-914-9953 • jim@atlanticwatergardens.com
www.atlanticwatergardens.com

EasyPro’s New 2013 Catalog Available

EasyPro Pond Products of Grant, Michigan has their new catalog available for 2013. We have increased our product line and offer you a large catalog packed with professional and do-it-yourself pond products.

To request your full color catalog or for more information on EasyPro products call 800-448-3873 or visit our website easyopropondproducts.com/catalog-request.

BioSafe Systems Announces GreenCleanFX Moss, Mold & Mildew Treatment Approved in California

BioSafe Systems is pleased to announce GreenCleanFX Moss, Mold & Mildew Treatment is now approved for sale in California. This outdoor, hard surface treatment effectively eliminates unsightly moss, mold, and mildew and controls the growth of odor-causing and slime forming bacteria. GreenCleanFX Moss, Mold & Mildew Treatment is an organic alternative to harsh chlorine-bleach, heavy metal copper, and phosphate based products. It will not harm nearby plants, shrubs, or trees, so there is no risk of overspray.

For information about GreenCleanFX Moss, Mold & Mildew Treatment, contact BioSafe Systems at 1.888.273.3088 (toll-free)

Rick Bartel Joins Atlantic Water Gardens

Atlantic Water Gardens, Mantua Ohio is pleased to announce internationally known water feature expert and educator Rick Bartel is joining the Atlantic team. As International Sales and Education Coordinator of industry leader Atlantic Water Gardens, Mr. Bartel will be opening up world-wide markets while continuing to be deeply involved in ongoing educational and sales efforts here and abroad.

“We are extremely happy to have such a great person and dedicated professional join our team,” said Jeff Weemhoff, President of Atlantic Water Gardens. A highly respected veteran in the industry and recipient of over 1,800 national and international awards, Rick’s accomplishments include the Water for the World Initiative, Ponds for Peace and the Water Feature Institute hosted by LinkedIn, which has become the world’s largest forum for water feature experts.

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