Rock On!
How rocks can make or break your project

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Publisher’s Perspective

What a minute! Who is that lady up there in that photo, you ask? And where is Tom? Valid questions, all … and it’s time they’re answered, so allow me introduce myself and get you up to date! My name is Lora Lee Gelles and I’ve been writing this column and producing this magazine since January. You may have noticed my name in the masthead under “Managing Editor” in the last few issues, but now it’s official: you are looking at the new Publisher of POND Trade Magazine. I absolutely love my new role. Publishing POND Trade allows me to merge what have previously been two separate passions: a 15-year career in magazine publishing and a love of gorgeous outdoor waterscapes. I’m anxious to put my graphic design experience to good use, sharing the beauty and magnificence of the ponding world with our readers!

As you can see by the cover, the focus of this issue is rocks — and lots of them! You’ll find three articles that illustrate the role rocks can play in your water features, each from an established authority with real experience turning clients into happy customers. For those who prefer flora, David Curtwright has written a detail-rich review of the genus Ludwigia, and business owners won’t want to miss Karen Leland’s feature on Pinterest. As you can see by the cover, the focus of this issue is rocks — and lots of them! You’ll find three articles that illustrate the role rocks can play in your water features, each from an established authority with real experience turning clients into happy customers. For those who prefer flora, David Curtwright has written a detail-rich review of the genus Ludwigia, and business owners won’t want to miss Karen Leland’s feature on Pinterest. Finally, we bid Tom Graham a very fond farewell on page 37. After over 20 years in magazines, the Grahams are vacating their editorial and ad sales roles to pursue a more relaxing lifestyle. I can’t say for certain what they’re planning next … but I’m sure you won’t find them far from a pond. I am so excited to be taking the reins of such an informative and well-loved magazine. In the months that I’ve been involved with POND Trade, I’ve learned that it is not only a valuable resource, but the cornerstone of a thriving community of passion-ate hobbyists and professionals. Tom and Cindy have built a strong reputation with fascinating and useful content from industry experts, and it is my goal and privilege to continue that tradition in the issues that come.

I’m looking forward to getting to know you all better. I want to hear what topics you’d like to know more about and would like to see in this magazine. Please feel free to call me at 888 356-9895 or 708 873-1921, or email me at llgelles@pondtrademag.com.

There’s a lot of PONDering on the road ahead, and I’m looking forward to sharing it with you. Rock on!

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POND Trade Magazine

www.pondtrademag.com
by Jim Lewis,
President of Lewis Landscape Services, Inc.

Our company does a lot of different kinds of landscaping, but water features are something we always look forward to doing. There are advantages and disadvantages to being an all-phases landscape contractor versus just being a water feature specialist. One of the advantages is that we can land really large jobs that we wouldn’t have been able to do if we just specialized in one genre of landscaping. This is one of those cases. We landed this job specifically because we could handle the entire landscaping project, and it was a very big job: a quarter of a million dollars in all.

Part of this project involved making a functional streambed/waterfall feature that would go with the rest of the landscape and also blend in with the surrounding forest area that this property backed up to. Our challenge was to make a water feature that was as natural as possible, sounded beautiful and fit into these surroundings. It was also imperative that the water feature match the scale of the project. Our clients wanted something that would really be a main focal point in their backyard. So even though water features aren’t our only business, our goal was to build a water feature that was as good as if they were our main business.

To accomplish this, we had several key phases that were imperative to succeeding in our goal.

The Design
The first thing we had to do was to come up with a design for our water feature. We work very closely with a local landscape designer, Susie Sonderen. We hired her to design this backyard landscape and water feature. After meeting with our clients and our project manager, Susie got busy creating a design where the water feature would be a main attraction but also compliment the rest of this amazing backyard. She designed a water feature that is 45 feet long and varying in width by about five to 10 feet along the way.

Inspiration
I really felt it was key for us to create a feature unlike anything we had done in the past. My inspiration came from reading a book called “The R.I.S.E. Method” by Rick Bartel. This book really changed my way of thinking when it came to water features. I felt it was important for everyone involved with the construction of this water feature to read the book as well. So I handed a copy of the book to our project manager, Brad Steyskal. He read it and was also very impressed. He had our construction foreman and each of the members of our install crew read it as well. It was the methods that Rick teaches in that book that really helped us to think outside the box and create a water feature that looked very natural and unique.

Unique Features
One of our goals was to add some unique features to this water feature that you wouldn’t normally see in every water
feature. We started by implementing a large rock bubbler that the client already had on site. This would be one of the spillways at the top of the water feature. But to make it even more unique and natural, we installed two more spillways as well, using hidden biofalls units near the top of the water feature. The installation of three different valves allowed us to increase or decrease the flow from each of the three water sources. When dialed in just right, it is difficult to tell where the water is actually coming from in this water feature, even when you are standing right next to it.

The final project was a result of all of our past experience, inspiration from Rick’s book, a great design and some creative ingenuity on all our parts, all combined to create one of our most successful water feature projects to date.

It took a little over a week for a team of three workers to install this water feature and the lighting around it. Our client ended up with a water feature that was natural, fit into its surroundings and was something unique that will serve as a talking point when entertaining guests. Our clients were thrilled with the end result and our workers learned a lot. We accomplished our goals and made good profit on the job. We now have another nice water feature to add to our portfolio. All in all, this was an ideal job.

Instead of bordering the water feature with only rock, as we had often done previously, we installed soil and mulch and logs right up to the edge of the stream, which helped it blend into the surrounding landscape well.

Of visual interest but also allowed us an amazing lighting opportunity for the next phase of our water feature. We found a bridge online at mastergardenproducts.com and installed it over the stream.

Next, our designer had the idea to install a small footbridge that would run over the water feature. This created a lot of visual interest and also allowed us an amazing lighting opportunity for the next phase of our water feature. We found a bridge online at mastergardenproducts.com and installed it over the stream.

We then tied some of the natural surroundings into the water feature. We used fallen logs that were on the property and had moss growing on them and placed these inside and around the edges of the water feature. Instead of bordering the water feature with only rock, as we had often done previously, we installed soil and mulch and logs right up to the edge of the stream, which helped it blend into the surrounding landscape well.

One final unique feature we installed was a variable-speed pump with remote control. It allows the owner to turn the flow of the water feature up or down with a little key fob. This was something that the homeowners were excited about because they would have something that none of their friends would have.

Outdoor Lighting
After we had completed the project, our next phase was to add outdoor lighting. We installed an 18-inch LED light bar (Kichler Design Pro LED) underneath the bridge to shine down on the water feature. That turned out to be a very nice effect. In addition, we installed accent lights on different sections of the water feature. Since there was a pathway next to the water feature, we also installed a few lights along the pathway that helped create a nice soft glow into the water feature area as well.

The final result was a photo of the landscape (left) before construction of the waterfall and surrounding landscape. The client had a dry streambed effect previously. We were able to repurpose the large, drilled bubbler rock in the bottom of this photo and use it as one of the spillways in the new water feature. A view of the entire water feature (right) in the late afternoon. Fallen logs, islands and various sizes and types of rock were implemented to help the water feature blend in well with the surroundings.

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The final result was a water feature that was natural, fit into its surroundings and was something unique that will serve as a talking point when entertaining guests.
Of all of the genera of plants available to aquatic plant enthusiasts, perhaps none is more diverse in form and habit than Ludwigia. Wherever you live and whatever your circumstance, there is probably at least one member of this genus that will do well in your water garden. Most of them are frost-tolerant, drought-resistant and otherwise capable of surviving almost anything that comes their way.

Ludwigia is a part of the family Onagraceae (which also includes Oenothera and Fuchsia), and includes approximately 75 species of herbaceous to semi-woody plants. It enjoys a cosmopolitan distribution, with most species occurring naturally in warm regions of the Americas. In North America, several species can be found either broadly distributed or in tightly circumscribed regions from northeast Mexico and Texas to New Jersey. Many species have been introduced to areas far afield from their native ground, however, and so have become naturalized in many places. Only a handful of species are commonly used in the water gardening world, and most of those are in aquaria.

Some confusion exists in the nomenclature within the genus. With a synonymic genus, Jusseia, and the close similarity of form between some species, confusion is bound to creep in at some point. For instance, what I have as L. repens, and have unquestioningly kept under that name for more than 40 years, turns out under closer scrutiny to be a form of L. peploides. It used to be called Jusseia repens f. peploides (hence the confusion), and what is kept as L. peploides is actually L. peploides peploides. There is a third form that produces red stems and narrower leaves and has an indentation on the outer margins of the petals. Furthermore, the actual L. repens is almost indistinguishable from L. palustris, which is completely different from my former L. repens. Also, what I got from a noted expert as L. peruensis, a tall bog plant, has a rival for that name in the aquarium plant industry that is utterly different from my plant.

The genus is large, interesting and, in most cases, easy to grow. Based upon growth habit, it is possible to divide it into three large groups.

**Group One**

First, there are those species that will persist in a submersed condition but will produce floating

**Lovely Ludwigia**

The many intricacies of a unique aquatic plant
colonies of tangled stems and leaves, or that will emerge and grow prostrate along embankments when forced to and remain strictly herbaceous. In form, they range from creeping plants with acuminate, linear leaves (L. arcuata); to plants with ovate to rhomboid leaves (L. palustris, L. repens) that might be small, and dark green, as occur when they are on drying mud, or about an inch across and bright red, as when they are underwater in full sun. All of these species — and there are several — can be used in planted aquaria to good effect.

Among the more strictly aquatic species is the very unusual Brazilian native, L. sedioides (Mosaic Plant), which, when it is happy, produces a striking pattern of floating rosettes of small, multi-colored leaves with notched edges, accented with bright yellow flowers. The neat and orderly appearance of the surface display conceals a tangle of roots, stems and old leaves just beneath the surface that provide a great habitat for small creatures. All of the species within this genus that I have grown, this one is the most exacting in its requirements and has proven to be the most difficult to overwinter. Nevertheless, the display in summer can be well worth the effort that is necessary to keep it alive in the greenhouse.

Group Two

The second grouping includes those plants that will grow underwater for short periods, but which do not produce submersed leaves that are substantially different from the emersed ones. They prefer to be in the air, and when they are, they float across open water or climb among reeds and other marginal plants that will support their weight. The floating stems frequently produce swollen areas along their length that serve as floatation devices. The leaves are ovate to lanceolate and prominently veined, and the stems become semi-woody. Examples include L. hexapetala and the various forms of L. peploides. These plants can form low-growing masses of tangled stems that make passage nearly impossible, with each year’s growth piling onto that of the
previous year unless the keeper thins it out every fall or in late winter, when it begins to regrow. There are at least two forms of L. peploides: one with inch-long leaves and flowers three quarters of an inch in diameter, which is better for small ponds; and the larger one, L. peploides peploides, which produces much larger leaves and flowers and is suitable only for large ponds. Because of the copious roots that they produce, all of the plants in this group are excellent adjuncts to biological filtration while they are actively growing.

**Group Three**

And finally, there are those plants that grow erect, strictly emersed, and become at least semi-woody. The larger species, such as the robust L. peruensis or the elegant L. longifolia, grow to several feet tall and can produce wild messes of tangled stems that reach 10 or 12 feet in length. Where they touch water, they root, and so form huge, nearly impassable colonies along river banks. So why would a person want one? Because they are handsome, they are floriferous, they mix well with other species and they respond very well to pruning. A person growing one in his pond might allow it to reach any height that he wants. I allow them to get to a size that is proportional to the pond and cut them at will above that line. In the fall, I knock them down to about 18 inches tall and allow them to start over in the spring. In mild winters here in Southern California, they can continue to grow almost unabated through the "cold" months. One drawback to their use is that they produce millions of dust-like seeds that will germinate in wet lawns and bog planters, but these pull easily when they are young and need not become too much of an issue. In some cases they look good within the landscape.

So, whether you are an aquarist or a pond keeper, the genus Ludwigia should not be overlooked when selecting species to include in your plantings. Their versatility and attractiveness fit well into most water gardens, and the bright yellow flowers accent the scene well. I use them as I can and would encourage people to consider the genus when planning what to include in their aquaria and bog gardens.

---

**About the Author**

**David Curtright** has been an expert on aquatic plants, an avid propagator and an active aquatic botanist for over 30 years. He has presided as President of The Southern California Water Garden Society for the past several years and is a member of the IWGS.

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**Don’t Put That There!**

How rock and boulder placement can make or break your project

by Rick Bartel,
Certified Educational Instructor and Speaker for the International Water Feature Industry

Removing all signs of human influence can be tedious, detail-oriented work. This attention to detail must be maintained at all levels of the project — particularly with the selection and placement of large rock and boulder material — in order to reach full sensory satisfaction in naturalistic results.

How critically important can rock and boulder placement be to the naturalistic look of our water features?

Let’s stop and think about that question for a moment.

After a water feature has been completed, there are basically only three kinds of items in view: the water, the terrestrial and aquatic plant material and the rocks and boulders.

The first element, water, only comes two ways: dirty or clean. Most people would obviously want clean water in their water features, so there really is no option here. If you have an adequate filtration system in operation, the water quality should provide for a clean appearance.

Thus, we can eliminate water from our equation.

Next is the plant material. Landscaping in and around a water feature can vary tremendously based simply on the selection of plants used or

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Rock Placement

This water feature, using 15 tons of material, can result in an unnatural appearance — plus, it requires buying, delivering and placing excessive amounts of rock.
Before we discuss proper placement, let’s take a look at attributes your rocks and boulders should possess in order to give the best natural finish. There are six critical areas to consider: Type, Size, Shape, Color, Character and Surface Texture.

**TYPE** — The type of rock used in any project should not change throughout the project. If you hike through a canyon, you will see a certain type of rock on your left and the same on your right. You will not see granite on one hillside followed by limestone on the next, so why do some contractors make this unacceptable change in their projects when they are attempting to recreate a naturalistic scene? Choose the type of stone that will best suit your needs and stay with that throughout your project for the best results.

One of the biggest errors committed in our industry is the use of larger river rocks and river boulders in pond projects. River rock is formed in fast, turbulent water and found naturally in stream and river bottoms where it is constantly bombarded by sand and silt, which create its smooth rounded surface. This type of rock will look completely out of place on the shore of a quiet, calm pond, leaving the viewer with the feeling that this pond is formed in calm, still waters, created by limestone on the next, so why do some contractors make this unacceptable change in their projects when they are attempting to recreate a naturalistic scene? Choose the type of stone that will best suit your needs and stay with that throughout your project for the best results.

Another incorrect use of rock type is a great example of good texture, showing the weathered surface of the boulder with nice moss and lichen coverage.

**SIZE** — One of the most common and dreadful errors in today’s water feature projects is the infamous “Pearl Necklace Effect,” in which a contractor lines up a series of same-sized rocks in a monotonous ring of stone surrounding the entire shoreline of the pond! No matter what anyone says about the appearance of this type of water feature, it most certainly doesn’t look natural. You can travel the entire world and never find a natural stream bank, pond edge or lakeshore that is lined with a continuous row of stone bowling balls. Vary the size of your rocks and boulders throughout your designs to create a more naturalistic appearance. You will also find that you will use a smaller amount of rock and stone, saving you additional money without cutting corners in quality.

**SHAPE** — Always try to use rocks and boulders void of any visual appearance of anything man-made. This includes the use of rocks or boulders that have too much of a resemblance to geometric shapes. If a rock is too round, too square or too triangular, it will not only stand out and create an unwanted focal point, but it will lend an air of human origins to your project. Remember, rocks and boulders should typically be structural elements or accents and not the center of attention. You want your visitors and viewers to experience the entire tranquil scene and not be constantly drawn to unwanted focal points.

**COLOR** — The colors of your rock materials need to be somewhat consistent with one another. At first glance, a rock may appear as if it is all one color, but upon careful examination you will see there are literally dozens of shades, speckles, blotches and spots that make up the surface of most rocks. For this reason, the rock material you choose can vary to some extent but needs to be within the same range of colors. The quickest way to make an out-of-place rock stick out and be unnecessarily noticed is to change its color. If all of the rocks in your project have a reddish hue, you certainly can’t have a big white rock stuck in the middle and expect it to belong there.

**CHARACTER** — This has always been my favorite attribute and can add tremendous interest and dimension to a natural appearance. Character, or more appropriately, “Character Lines,” are all the little ridges, valleys, crevices, folds and grooves you will find formed on the surface of many varieties of stone. Character lines will enhance the appearance of the rock over time through the natural forces of character lines, from subtle surface variations to deeper crevices and grooves.

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Naturalistic appearances are a delicate balance between properly selecting and then properly placing your rock material.

**Surface Texture** — Some contractors like the appearance of freshly broken rock because it unveils the more vividly colored center of the stone, not yet faded by exposure to abrasive weather conditions. However, fresh breaks in rock material give that distinctive man-made quality, since most of these breaks and scars are the result of poor harvesting techniques at the stone quarries. In addition, these freshly broken surfaces usually yield sharp, jagged edges that can be damaging to surfaces such as EPDM pond liners. Naturally appearing, old and worn surfaces can make a huge difference in the overall visual effects desired in a natural setting. A key ingredient to this surface texture is the presence of lichens and mosses, which will grow naturally over time or can be introduced.

**Placement**

Now that we have some knowledge regarding the key elements to watch for when selecting rocks and boulders for truly natural-looking water feature projects, let’s take a serious look at how and where these materials should be placed. I like to imagine myself as a drop of water, physically moving down a stretch of stream or over a waterfall and visualizing where I would go or what would happen if there were an object in front of me. This visual process allows me to imagine what would happen to water traveling through my features. I can see what the water is going to do in my mind as I place each rock or boulder.

The key aspects of water feature enjoyment are the sights and sounds of moving water. Hydraulic action and turbulence created from water flowing over rock specifically give us this desired result, so follow these tips to ensure that your rock placement and moving water work together for stunning results.

- Always alter or adjust your water’s path. Force it to become narrower and then wider, make the water shallower and then deeper or turn it left and then right. Keep it constantly shifting and changing as it makes its way down the stream or waterfall and across the pond.
- Adjusting a large boulder left, right, forward or backward a few inches—or even turning it slightly one way or the other — can dramatically change the course of your water. These slight adjustments can create turbulence where there was none before.
- Be aware of the available output of your pump, as this will ultimately dictate how far apart your rocks and boulders can be placed. Four inches apart might be great for creating hydraulic turbulence with 8,000 gallons of water per hour, but it will make no more than a ripple with 2,000 gallons of water per hour.
- If a particular area is too calm, mix it up by adding some resistance to create turbulence. Never allow water to move more than two or three feet without changing direction, even if it is a subtle change.
- Rocks should make an erratic path between properly selecting and then properly placing your rock material.
along the inside edges of streams and pond shorelines; you also want this same concept of erratic and spontaneous rock placement extending out into the landscape.

- Use the surface of rock material to your advantage. If a large boulder has a dished-out curve on one of its surfaces, use that to help you move the water in the direction you want it to go … or better yet, use it to force the water in another direction, creating additional hydraulics.

- Don’t always get caught up making the water do what you want it to do. Allow nature to do what it wants to do naturally. Let the rocks tell you where they need to be placed for the best end results.

- Always start with the largest rocks first, building the basic foundation of the water course and getting all the main elements in place. Then work down to the smaller material to create interest and turbulence as well as smaller twists and turns within the bigger turns.

- Never allow your stream banks or pond shorelines to be more than 50 percent large rock material. The worldwide average for natural waterlines is about 40 percent rock.

- Try adding splits and islands into your streams for added dimension and water movement. The downstream side of an island, protected from the current, is a great place for debris buildup such as a piece of driftwood, a bed of gravel and a few plants.

- Exaggerate your turns to force water to rebound off of the rocks’ surfaces and not just slide by. Remember that water is like a race car; it will always cut corners, taking the shortest distance between two points and the path of least resistance.

- Try placing boulders extremely close together to force the water through tight channels and canyons for outstanding effects.

- For the best advice on natural rock placement, go take a hike … seriously! Take a nice, leisurely stroll along a stream and study the effects the rocks have on the water’s movement. You will learn more playing in a stream than you will ever learn in a classroom.

About the Author

Rick Bartel, a thirty-year veteran, bestselling author and Certified Master Water Feature Specialist, is most known throughout the industry for his popular R.I.S.E. Method of naturalistic design. Credited with more than 1,800 national and international awards and recognitions for his phenomenal work, including the 2009 and 2010 Water Feature Contractor of the Year award, Rick was the 2011 Master of Design recipient and in 2012 was named the industry’s most sought-after guest speaker and one of the most influential people in our industry.

How to Move a Mountain

Placing huge boulders is no small job

by Demi Fortuna,
Atlantic Water Gardens

When I was growing up I always admired Fred Flintstone. He handled his big Brontosaurus with such skill, the giant dinosaur picking up huge boulders with its mouth and moving them precisely where needed them. When I started moving stones for a living I searched for the mechanical equivalent of that sauropod stone setting system, but moving big rocks turned out to be harder than Fred made it appear! We had to figure out ways of “finessing” the larger boulders, especially the ones that were too big for our little machine to handle, without damaging the fragile rubber liner underneath. Here are a couple of the crazy tricks that we’ve come up with over the years. I hope you find something useful:

“BASKETING” STONES ONTO THE LINER. When we first started out, we used straps (left) around the bottoms of the larger stones, securing them to be sure they wouldn’t fall while lifting them with the skid-steer loader. We’d set a couple of flat rocks under the stone on either side of the strap to support the boulder while we pulled the strap out, either leaving them in place or carefully rocking the boulder side to side to remove them, all the while taking care not to damage the liner.

EVENTUALLY WE FOUND AN EASIER WAY. Using chains, we found we could “basket” even the largest stones if we were careful. The technique is simple. With the stone as close to its final spot as possible, oriented the way you want it to go, wrap a high-strength, eight-foot chain with grab hooks around the bottom third of the stone, attaching the grab hook snugly. Then, take the rest of the chain over the top of the stone and attach the other grab hook to the exact opposite spot on the other side of the stone. It will take some practice and maybe a couple of tries to get the balance right, but you’ll soon find you can lift the stone and set it gently down on the liner with the chain safely around the outside of the stone.

Rock Tips

How to Move a Mountain

Placing huge boulders is no small job

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WHERE THERE’S A WILL, THERE’S A WAY.

We found that the same technique of “basketing” (above) with the chain attached to the cross bar of the arms — without the bucket or forks — would allow us to slide the stone up on the “belly” of the skid-steer, even if it weighed too much to lift with the forks in place. Again, ATTEMPT THIS AT YOUR OWN RISK. We aren’t saying you should try this; we’re just admitting that we have when it was absolutely necessary.

**WARNING!!**

You may have to keep the chain from slipping off the boulder until it grabs as it’s lifted, so be VERY CAREFUL not to get your fingers pinched. The chain will tighten on the boulder as you slowly lift, but it can easily slip or the stone can roll if it’s not perfectly balanced, so you’ll have to move slowly and be ready to drop the stone as you inch it into position. You’ll want to play with chain placement and balance outside the liner until you and your crew are comfortable with the technique before attempting to place a large boulder, but it’s worth the trouble. Once you “basket” you’ll never sling again.

“BELLYING” BIG BOULDERS ON THE SKID-STEER. When ordering stone, we’d always try to give the stone yard an idea of the size we wanted — from 400 to 800 pounders, let’s say — and they would invariably send three or four the size of Volkswagens, hidden at the bottom of the load. Once dumped, there was no other choice; we had to move one-ton-plus behemoths that were one ton or more and well over the capacity of the skid-steer.

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

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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 10 years of which were in product research, development, sales and product training.
A s someone who does marketing and branding strategy and implementation, it’s my job to stay on top of the latest and greatest in the world of would-be life-altering Internet bells and whistles. Ironically, however, the last thing I wanted to do was learn yet another social media tool that promised to transform my online life. But day after day, my husband, Jon, would flash his iPad in front of my face and tease me with its bells and whistles. Eventually, I gave in and signed up. It’s called Pinterest.

**What is Pinterest and Why Should You Care?**

How a virtual pinboard can revolutionize your business

by Karen Leland, Author of “The Ultimate Guide to Pinterest for Business”

I t was a reaction to my husband’s love of Pinterest. Jon had a Pinterest account and discussed it often with me. He had over 10,000 pins and was the fastest-growing social media site in history. I had heard of it, but I was not interested in it. I was more interested in Google+ and Twitter at the time. Jon showed me how to use Pinterest and I was hooked!

**Who is Using Pinterest, and How Are They Using It?**

At the time of this writing, Pinterest has over 10 million users and is the fastest-growing social media site in history. Beyond that, the various and sundry stats that are shaping Pinterest include:

1. A review of Google Display Network Ad Planner, a free tool for building online media plans, shows that 72 percent of Pinterest users are female and that 66 percent of those are age 35 or older.
2. A Pew Internet & American Life Project survey of U.S. adults found that nearly 20 percent of women using the Internet are on Pinterest.
3. According to Experian, a global information services company, the average amount of time visitors spend surfing the Pinterest site is an hour.
4. If those statistics don’t make a small-business mind sit up and take notice, nothing will. And by following these simple tips, you too can leverage the power of Pinterest for the benefit of your business.

**Focus on Niche Lifestyle Boards**

Addison Landscapes and Maintenance Inc. (http://pinterest.com/addisontn/) has 27 boards, each dedicated to a different aspect of their art. For example, their board “Color of Our Moment: Green” features all things landscape- and garden-related in various shades of green. Another, named “Fire Features,” shows pins of outdoor fireplaces.

**Make the Plants the Star**

Beyond the garden-variety rose, hydrangea and lantana bush lies a whole world of exotic yet practical plants. VODA Landscape + Planning (http://pinterest.com/vodaplant/) has a colorful board titled “Plant of the Week,” which features unusual plants that most people have never considered planting in their yards.

**10 Top Ways to Win Using Pinterest for Your Pond Business**

1. Strategize First and Pin Second: Consider your objectives before you pin. Are you trying to drive traffic to your website, boost your brand awareness, promote new products or services, educate your customer base, enhance customer understanding and enthusiasm, increase prospects and sales or improve customer service? Depending on your strategy, you will want to pick the images that best support your objective.
2. Manage and Balance Your Percentages: Create inviting boards by making 40 percent of your pins instructional and educational, 40 percent motivational and inspiring, 20 percent about your brand — including products, services, sales items, profiles, specials and contests.
3. Make Your Website Pin-Friendly: Install the Pin It Button on your website and give every page and blog post a featured image that can be pinned automatically. In addition, put a “Follow me on Pinterest” social media button on your homepage.
4. Share With, Engage and Promote Others: Build your brand by engaging with others through re-pinning, commenting on and liking other pins. You can also tag (using the @ tag) another pinner you know on Pinterest.
5. Establish Your Expertise: Craft keyword-rich pin and board titles and descriptions to boost your Google ranking and be found for your expertise. Use hashtags (#) to highlight key words and phrases your customers search for. In addition, emphasize pins with a focus on problems and solutions you specialize in.
6. Integrate Pinterest With Your Other Social Media: Connect with your other social media by creating a Pinterest tab on Facebook, Tweeting your pins and embedding pins in your blog posts.
7. Organize Your Pinboard: Research shows that pins placed front and center receive the highest percentage of viewers and capture the most attention. So place your most important pins near the middle of the top or second row of the board.
8. Give Away Value-Added Information: According to Pinterest, a tool for tracking Pinterest analytics, pins that have a call to action see an 80 percent increase in engagement. Post pins that focus on free reports, e-books, videos and podcasts you offer. Be sure to add a live link to each of those pins’ descriptions. The more you entice pinners to take action, the more effective you’ll be.
9. Leverage the Power of Multimedia: Make your pinboards more interactive by sharing videos, webinars, teleclasses, screenscasts and podcasts. Good multimedia pins include: presentations, expert tutorials, product demos, behind-the-scenes tours and excerpts from live recorded interviews, courses and trainings.
10. Analyze Your Metrics: Sign up for access to Pinterest Web Analytics via your settings page and pay attention to which of your pins generate the greatest response and interest. The info will help you see which of your pinning efforts are paying off and shape your future strategy.


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5. Install LED lights
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Language of Koi

Showa Sanshoku

The unique history and personality of three-colored koi

by Taro Kodama,

Kodama Koi Farm

I started working for my father in Japan over 15 years ago, and although I grew up at one of the biggest koi companies in Japan, I still remember my surprise when I came across a handful of koi hobbyists who raised only Showa. I do not know, even today, anybody who raises only a certain variety like Kohaku or Kujaku. Showa seems to be the only variety that can get that kind of raving fans. Let’s talk about this exciting variety today.

I must say that for the last 10 years, no other variety has developed as much as Showa. This is quite obvious when you see Showa suddenly start winning grand championships at All Japan Koi Shows.

Showa Development:

To understand this variety, it is good to understand its brief history. Just as Sanke’s proper name is Sanshoku, Showa is properly called Showa Sanshoku. Sanshoku means three colors, referring to the koi’s red, black and white. Showa is a black-based koi with an unexpected change of sumi pattern. It is very important to know that Matsukawabake is the foundation of Showa. It is because of this that Showa has such a dynamic sumi pattern that changes.

It was 30 years after the very first Showa by Mr. Hoshino that Mr. Kobayashi developed the famous Kobayashi Showa. He introduced Kohaku blood to this variety and developed brighter hi (red), better shiroji (white ground) and lacquer sumi (black) on the body of Showa. His Showa was definitely epoch-making and won the very first Grand Champion title at the All Japan Koi Show.

We had to wait for another 20 years until Showa won the same title. The koi that won is the famous Dainichi Showa. This Koi is very important for two reasons. One is that Showa could finally have more shiroji (white ground) on the body. Since Kobayashi Showa, breeders have been trying to increase the amount of shiroji area on the body. The other is that Showa could finally have the body and size to win the championship. Compared to Kohaku and Sanke, Showa has a difficult time growing big and strong.

Differences between Showa Sanshoku and Sanke Sanshoku:

As both names have Sanshoku, it is apparent that both are three-colored koi. The difference, however, is in the way the sumi pattern develops. Sumi develops on the face of Showa, but not on that of Sanke. While sumi develops in a form of Motoguro in Showa, it forms dynamic sumi pattern that changes.
in strips in Sanke. Sumi develops more dynamically from the belly in the Showa, while it develops more dotted on the top part of the Sanke body. Think of it this way: Showa is a black koi with white and red; Sanke is a white koi with red and black.

**Showa Appreciation**

Just like Sanke, Showa is Kohaku with a sumi pattern, although the sumi character is very different from that of Sanke. So we approach a koi as Kohaku first. Then, you see how sumi are — or will be — located to express the beauty.

When you look at Showa, check the following:

1. **Kohaku**
   - Please check the quality of the Kohaku. How is its shiroji (white ground)? Is it snow white? How is the hi (red)? Then, check how those quality colors form the design on the body of the koi. Unlike Sanke, the Kohaku pattern of Showa is not necessarily a must.

2. **Sumi**
   - Why is the Kohaku pattern of Showa not as important as it is for Sanke? It is because of the characteristics of sumi on Showa. As I said, Showa sumi is that of the Matsukawabake variety. In other words, the foundation of the koi is the black color. Thus, it develops massively and dynamically. Even though it may lack in some part of the Kohaku pattern, if the sumi appears in good balance, it will be good enough. If you look at this picture and see only Kohaku pattern, you know it is not as good. But once the sumi develops, it will not matter. It is more important to predict what kind of sumi quality will appear and where.

3. **Breeder**
   - What quality of sumi will develop where and how is a very important question. There are several things you must know in order to make the prediction, but information about the breeder is definitely the most critical one.

**About the Author**

Taro Kodama is President of Kodama Koi Farm. It is the largest importer and distributor of quality Japanese koi in the U.S. With locations in Japan, Hawaii and New Jersey, Kodama koi farm carries over 35,000 Japanese Koi from the top breeders in Japan. Taro Kodama, along with his father, Mamoru Kodama, provide not only winning show koi, but they also conduct many koi seminars.
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“Pond” Farewell

25 Years in a Few Hundred Words
Tom Graham’s farewell to magazine production

When I first met Tom and Cindy Graham, I had no idea what the koi and water garden world meant to them or what their roles were in it.

In the months since we met, however, I have realized that there is a story to be told here.

Tom is one of those lucky few for whom the koi hobby started out as a passion and turned into a job he loved. He became an active member of his local koi club over 25 years ago, and that connection ended up changing his life.

Tom learned about the Koi Club of San Diego (KCSD) from Takemi Adachi, Owner of California Koi Farms. When he and Cindy stopped in at the farm for the first time, Takemi was rushing off to attend a meeting to help create the club and told Tom about it. Tom attended its first meetings, worked its first koi show and won Grand Champion Novice in the club's second show with a classic Sanke.

He showed fish at every KCSD show thereafter for 25 years, as well as at a number of shows held by other local clubs. He served as President and Koi Show Chairman for the Koi Club of San Diego on more than one occasion. He also served as the official show photographer for KCSD for many years and produced a number of multimedia presentations of the shows.

Tom enjoyed speaking at events like this one at the IWGS Symposium 2010 held in San Angelo, Texas.

Joel Burkard of Pan Intercorp, a longtime friend, and Tom Graham in Seattle for a koi show.

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Joel Burkard of Pan Intercorp, a longtime friend, and Tom Graham in Seattle for a koi show.

Tom enjoyed speaking at events like this one at the IWGS Symposium 2010 held in San Angelo, Texas.
Tom has made several trips to Japan. Here he is enjoying talking to two young Japanese koi breeders (left). He loved to visit advertisers at their booths: here he is visiting the Atlantic Water Gardens booth in Las Vegas (below). Tom with his wife Cindy (bottom, left) produced 90 issues of POND Trade Magazine. Rolf Nelson of Nelson Water Garden & Nursery and Tom chat at an IWGS event in Texas.

shows for the awards banquets, using slides he shot throughout the events synced to music and multiple slide projectors.

Tom often was not in many photos because he was taking them. He had more cover photos for KOI USA than anyone before or since. Speaking of photos, the Associated Koi Club of America’s (AKCA) Champion of Champion photo contest was Tom’s idea. He had to convince Bob Finnegan and the rest of the AKCA staff that it was doable. It has continued to be a staple event at seminars for years thereafter, and is still an annual contest for AKCA.

With Tom’s convention services background and contacts, he was able to convince AKCA to hold their annual seminar outside of the Los Angeles area by moving it to San Diego in 1990. This was the beginning of the multi-day format for the seminar.

In 1993 at one of the AKCA seminars, they asked Tom to step into the roles of Editor (temporarily), Production Manager and Ad Sales Manager for KOI USA, which he took. As the job demands grew, he recruited his wife Cindy to join him, and she took over layout and design so he could focus on sales. During his tenure, they helped the magazine grow from 60 pages to 148. Cindy even served as (a very popular) Editor for a few years. In total, they produced 90 issues over 15 years.

Tom also created and published the popular KOI ID Poster, sold primarily through AKCA, and he sold the Koi Collector’s Pocket Guide directly. Many of his photos and articles have appeared in books, calendars and other magazines over the years.

In 2008 he and his wife, Cindy, ventured out with their own magazine, POND Trade Magazine. As our readers know, it has thrived under their leadership, evolving into the magazine I was proud to purchase from them recently.

Over the years he has kept close contact with businesses in the trade and hobbyists worldwide. He enjoyed going to koi shows wherever he could, from the All Japan Koi Show in Japan to the British Koi Keepers Koi show in England and many dozens of shows throughout the U.S.

Locally, he was instrumental in the development and construction of the 8,000-gallon koi pond at the Japanese Friendship Garden (JFG) in San Diego, and he served on the JFG Board of Directors for many years. It was his vision to have only high-quality koi in the pond and build it to true koi pond specifications, which was unheard of in other public gardens.

Tom has loved talking on the phone and in person at many of your businesses and events around the country. He loves to talk to anyone and everyone who has an interest in koi, water features and pond construction. His largest personal pond totaled over 7,500 gallons and was six feet deep --- a true show koi pond.

He also enjoyed working with the International Pond Professional Companies Association (IPPCA), the International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society (IWGS), Pondemonium (by Aquascape Inc.), the National Association of Pond Professionals (now part of IPPCA), Pondapalooza (also gone by the wayside) and many clubs and their events. At one time he belonged to three koi clubs and the local water garden society.

After doing ad sales for 20 years, the time has come for Tom to take a break and do things that, hopefully, will not be as stressful.

Tom and Cindy continue to help me with the transition and they “wish Lora Lee many successful years to come.” Tom would love to talk to you and keep in touch.
**Rock Selection**

**Choosing the right stones to rock your pond project**

By Mark Jessen, Owner, Rock to Rubber, The Fish Tender

Since the beginning of time, rocks have been our oldest historians. Some of them are over 3.5 billion years old. They come in many sizes, shapes, ages, colors and weights. Classified into three main groups or types, they are: Sedimentary, Metamorphic and Igneous.

It should be noted that each type of rock has a different degree of hardness. You should check with your local rock expert to see what is best suited for your project and environment.

Let’s start with a brief description of each. Sedimentary rocks consist of layers: particles of sand, shells, fossils and other smaller rocks we know as sediment. After billions of years, these layers of sediment have compressed into rock. In some cases, these rocks are softer and may crack or crumble depending on the weather and their use. The weather should play a big part in your selection, so keep this in mind when selecting rocks.

Some examples of sedimentary rocks are Limestone, Sandstone and Siltstone. These are widely used for pond-building in Central Texas because of the temperature. Sandstone and limestone are the softest of the sedimentary rocks.

Metamorphic rocks are formed underground under intense heat and pressure and after billions of years the effect or look can be quite unique. Marble and slate are some examples of this harder rock.

Igneous rocks are molten rocks (also known as magma) very deep inside the Earth. For billions of years these rocks have been heating and cooling and rising closer to the surface. Sometimes, when there is an eruption in the form of a volcano, the rock that is produced is Lava.

Lava rock and granite are very common igneous rocks.

When it comes time to look for rocks for a water garden project, most people get them either before or after the hole is dug. Of course this depends on you. Note: Before you start handling rocks you should be wearing work gloves, eye protection and some type of back support. When picking out rocks you should be prepared to move them more than one time. One pinched finger or crushed hand can ruin your whole day. Also, when buying rock you should buy by the ton, not by the pound. It should be cheaper.

Will the pond be made with concrete or an EPDM liner? Your budget will decide this question. If you can afford concrete, I believe it’s the best way to go. If not, EPDM liners are much more affordable and are almost as good.

**EPDM Pond Liner:**

Before you pick up your first rock, decide the style of rockwork you plan to use. Will it be the All Natural Dry-Stack look or will the rocks be cemented together — or a little of both?

When building a pond, in terms of water handling and architecture, think simplicity and ease of maintenance. Rocks native to your area should create a more natural look to your pond.

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**EPDM Pond Liner:**

An EPDM pond with sample rock types for building ponds provided by Daniel Stone and Landscaping Designs, Austin, Texas.
This is a very important question you need to ask yourself. Will your rockwork style (your coping or edging, veneering, creek or waterfall) be safe for children, pets or yourself when walking or climbing on them?

When building a pond, in terms of water handling and architecture, think simplicity and ease of maintenance. Rocks native to your area should create a more natural look for your pond.

**Rock setting options**

**DRY STACK:**
**Pro:** An all-natural look can be most beautiful if done correctly, as it can look like it was there before the house was built.
**Con:** In most cases you will be using bigger, heavier rocks — and more of them. These rocks can become loose or wobbly, and loose rocks can fall into the pond and damage it. A lot of exposed liner may be seen if the pond is not properly leveled at construction.

**CEMENTING ROCKS:**
**Pro:** When done correctly the pond is cleaner, stronger and safer — and you use less rock. Rocks bond or stick well to concrete and may need fewer repairs to the rockwork over time.
**Con:** Concrete will not bond or stick to the pond liner because the liner is too smooth. For concrete to work well it needs something to adhere to, like other rocks. Recently patented RockToRubber is an anchor which will provide that necessary bonding.

Over the past 30 years I have built a few ponds and repaired many. The majority of these ponds were built using sedimentary and metamorphic rocks. I believe this is due to the location of the rocks and mining cost. In general, sedimentary rocks are above the surface and metamorphic and igneous are beneath.

When dealing with rocks, remember: be patient, be careful and have fun.

**About the Author**

Mark Jessen is the Owner of The Fish Tender, a CoFounder of the Austin Pond Society and Inventor of the patented masonry anchor known as RockToRubber. His two websites are www.rocktorubber.com and www.thefishtender.com
Giving Back

Schoolyard Habitats
Backyard Getaway brings the joy of ponding to students

by Lisa Burns,
Backyard Getaway

When my husband/business partner Dave and I opened our business, we decided that we wanted to give back to the community. We offered the usual fundraising pond tours like many other pond businesses offer, but the most rewarding program is our school habitat program. Creating schoolyard habitats is not a new concept, but in case you are not familiar with it, the school habitat program offers an outside-the-box learning experience for students. It is a unique tool integrating math, science and life skills curricula into a hands-on project. Students learn how math relates to a pond through measuring and basic math skills. They learn science as it relates to water flow, evaporation and plants. Each project is a complete habitat with a water feature and native wildlife garden. Once completed, the project becomes a permanent outdoor classroom for future generations to learn from and add to. We have been teaching these classes at local schools for several years and every time I am in awe of the young people we work with.

Getting started
For our first school project we chose Manatee Glens ARC (Adolescent Recovery Center), a live-in facility for teenagers with substance abuse and mental health problems, to be the recipient. We approached the facility manager with the idea and she loved it. Of course, none of us were sure how the students would react. At first they were standoffish. Some of the girls did not want to get their hands dirty, and some of the boys looked at what we were doing as work. Slowly, with a bit of coaxing, they came around. Excitement and cooperation grew once they realized that they were actually going to create something that they would get to keep. The students came up with ways to extend the project into other areas of their studies. One student wrote a column for the school newspaper about the project, sharing her feelings and documenting changes in the pond, goldfish and plants.
A couple of years ago we started teaming up with local teaching artists to expand our habitats into combined art and nature projects. Students now create, in addition to their habitat, a mural and mosaic art pieces. This added layer has given us a chance, as a team, to offer a more diversified, hands-on project and allows us to work with many more students.
Each project is unique to the particular school’s environment.
Budget, location of the habitat and age of the students are all taken into consideration when planning a project. With that in mind, we decided that a pond-free water feature would be the most beneficial and easiest feature to adapt to any setting. We create each feature using the Atlantic Water Gardens Pond-Free Kit or Colorfalls system. The kits contain everything you need in one box, keeping it simple.

A growing impact
As excitement over the program has grown over the years so has the class size. Our first class included 25-30 students. Over the last couple of years the classes have ranged from 100-300 students over a two- to three-day project. Although the majority of our projects have been created with middle school children, you can create a project with any age. Last year we worked with two sister schools simultaneously, creating complimentary retaining wall features at each school: one an elementary school and the other a special-needs school for children ages three to 22. The students co-mingled, working together on both of their habitats. This project was made possible through a grant from MetLife and the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts.

Our latest project included a pond-free waterfall, a peace garden with mosaic benches and a mural, all created by over 200 students. The entire project was documented on video by one student while several others became journalists interviewing their fellow classmates. We were extremely impressed with the students at this school. The students at Harllee are committed to ending bullying in schools. These kids worked together without any conflicts, and they voted on which rocks to place in the waterfall, where each plant should be planted and the exact placement of their benches. To show their enthusiasm for the project, they created a 25-foot-long banner filled with quotes from the participants, which was presented at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The entire school came out to celebrate their new EcoScape with the JROTC, making a profit and the free publicity is a nice bonus. As business owners it is our goal to make a profit, while our primary goal as community members is to give back to that community. The school habitat project can accomplish both.

Whether you offer a way to raise funds, or work with the school to acquire grant money for the project, it is important to price the habitat as you would any other project. If you wish to give back, then by all means donate your time. For our first school project, we donated our time and purchased pond materials with funds we raised from our pond tour. The publicity we received could not have been more valuable. From the second project on, we either donated all or a portion of our labor or would include donated equipment or materials we received from...
Pump Up the Customer Satisfaction

Keep your pond owners happy with pump education and maintenance

Erik Tate, The Water Garden

Pumps: they are the heart of the pond. But when a pump fails it can mean many things. Filters may suffer and fish may die. At the very least, your customer is inconvenienced. The majority of customers understand that a pump, like most anything else, will not last forever and they generally don’t expect it to. But premature pump failure often leaves a sour taste in a pond keeper’s mouth. Even if the pump is replaced for free under warranty, it is still generally an unpleasant situation for your customer. It also adds more to your to-do list. So what can we do to help ensure that our customers’ pumps last as long as possible? The two main points I want to address that will reduce the number of warranties you have to deal with are proper pump selection and proper pump maintenance.

Using a pump that is appropriate for the application is critical. I’m not going to go into all the factors involved with pump selection here; that is for a much longer column and has been addressed numerous times in POND Trade and other publications. If you or your staff needs additional help knowing how to select a suitable pump, make sure you get this training as soon as possible. It will be indispensable moving forward.

What have I learned through these projects? Making a difference, acceptance, patience and having fun are as important in business as profit and publicity. Our projects have never had to pay for advertising the school. Sending a simple press release and inviting our suppliers to help keep the cost down for the school. We have never had to pay for advertising the school projects. Sending a simple press release and inviting the media to ribbon-cutting ceremonies has helped us spread the word about the program and has generated television coverage. Publicity through local newspapers, magazines and even the leisure press has generated interest in our school habitat program. The best way to do this may depend on your resources. Unfortunately, most pumps have little if any care instructions included in the box, so it is up to you to make sure the information gets to those who need it. Some manufacturers do provide this information; it just may not be included in the box. Check with the manufacturer of the pumps you provide. They may have a video you can put on your website. Or, they may be able to help you create a handout to provide each customer that tells him or her what to do with his or her specific pump.

I have also heard of some retailers that offer a pump maintenance service. Allow your customers to periodically bring in their pumps for an inspection and cleaning for a service charge. This doesn’t give you less to do, but can bring in some extra income.

Whatever you do will be appreciated by your customers. It gives them longer service lifetimes from their pumps and reduces the time you spend dealing with warranties. It all ties into the main focus of this column: improving the happiness level of the pond owners.

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Erik Tate operates The Water Garden, LLC. The company was started in 1987 by his parents, Randall and Karen. Having grown up in the pond industry, a passion for water gardening became ingrained in who Erik is. Based in Chattanooga, TN, The Water Garden is a distributor of quality pond supplies.

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Not Just Fish in a Barrel

Safely transporting koi to a koi show

by Ellen Kloubec,
Kloubec Koi Farm

So, you’ve committed to being a "wet vendor" at your local koi show. Congratulations! Now the real work begins. The key to a successful trade show outcome is to provide the best quality koi possible.

Start with fish purchased from a reputable koi breeder. You should rely on one who is knowledgeable about koi health practices and maintaining optimal koi quality — not a hobby farm. Know your limits and only take the number of fish that you feel comfortable transporting and handling at one time.

Plan ahead

Determine how much room you’ll be allowed for your booth space. Generally, trade show booths are 10 feet by 10 feet in size, and can be reserved in multiples if needed. Make a sketch of your booth. If you’re going to showcase pond equipment along with the koi fish, it’s best to have a plan for your space before you arrive at the show venue. You will also need a sign for your booth. If you don’t already have some type of sign or banner display you’ll need to get one ordered ASAP!

Next, create a flier or handout to gain exposure. Many times potential clients will call on you months after the event. Make sure you have plenty of business cards on hand, too. Trade show attendees like to pick up the free fliers from vendor booths. Provide them plenty of opportunities to come to you for their pond needs.

Organize your koi equipment

Plan to take everything that you’ll need to take care of your koi and ensure their health and well-being. Koi tank, aeration device, water pump and hose, nets, koi viewing bowls, poly bags and ringing pliers with rubber bands and rings are just some of the items you’ll need to pack and take along to the show venue. Don’t forget to take your water test kits and plenty of chlorine remover products. It’s best to have all of your own equipment and supplies. Since you’ll be transporting and selling fish, you will also need to take oxygen along to the show. First you’ll need to contact local authorities to determine the safest way to travel with an oxygen cylinder. There are regulations pertaining to oxygen cylinders and usage at public events such as koi shows. You may need bungee cords, straps or tie-downs, a cart or other items in order to comply with regulations.

Preparing your koi

Koi should be purged for at least one week prior to transportation. The practice of withholding feed preceding travel greatly reduces ammonia buildup once the koi are bagged for transport to the show. It also aids in maintaining good water quality in the show tanks. Ammonia buildup can also occur after the koi are bagged for the customers and taken to their new homes.

In the 24 hours leading up to the show you should reduce the temperature of your fish’s holding water by 10 to 15 degrees. This will slow the breathing and activity of the koi slightly, having a calming effect on them. It is also a good idea to add salt to the water to increase the koi’s slime coat, which will help to protect them during handling and jostling to the show site. Dissolve three pounds of pure salt for every 50 gallons of water and add it to the holding tanks before you start the bagging process.

Bagging your koi

Finally, on the day you’ve set to travel you should have all items and equipment loaded prior to packaging your koi. The fish should be the last thing you load in order to reduce the time they spend in the bags. You will need to drain the koi tank water to a level that will facilitate easy capturing of your fish. Be sure to maintain aeration at all times. The capture, netting and bagging process will be stressful for the koi, so the more you can do to reduce the stress for them, the better they will cope with the whole ordeal. Prepare the poly bags with well-oxygenated water that is the same temperature as the holding tank water, and add a water treatment. Begin netting
bag, trying to get little or no fouled water into the bag. Continue collecting the koi and fill bags to an appropriate quantity of fish in each. If you are transporting koi of 12 inches it is suggested to put a maximum of four fish in each bag. Smaller fish can be packaged 20 per bag. An adequate water level is an amount to cover the fish gills, so add more water if necessary.

Inflate the poly bag with pure oxygen and secure it with rubber rings. You should have four to five times more oxygen than water inside the bags. Double bags are preferred. Carefully place the bags of koi into coolers or shipping boxes for the trip. (A one- or two-pound ice pack can be added to the coolers to help maintain the temperature.)

Setting up and unloading your koi

You need to release your koi as soon as possible, so when you arrive at the show site locate your booth and immediately set up and fill your fish tanks. Treat the water with a chlorine remover and start your aeration pump in the show tanks immediately. Many koi clubs will offer to rent show tanks to the vendors. If you have rented a show tank, you need to find out if the water has been pretreated with a dechlorinator product. It is always a good idea to test for chlorine and chloramines, regardless. Many municipal water supplies are very heavily chlorinated! Use a good quality dechlorinator product. Float the sealed koi bags in the show tank to equalize the water temperature. A minimum of 15 minutes should be expected.

When the temperature equalizes, it is finally time to release your fish. Here are two methods for fish release:

1. Float an empty koi bowl or tub in the show tank. Open the bag and pour the fish and water into the tub. Then, carefully lift each fish out of the bowl and release it into the tank. Remove the tub and dispose of the fouled transport water.

2. While floating a bag in the show tank, grasp the bag’s end and remove the rubber bands, setting the bag upright in the tank. Fold or roll any excess bag down until you can easily reach inside and lift each koi out of the bag. Gently release the fish into the show tank. Remove the bag and fouled transport water and dispose of them properly.

Selling to the customer

When presenting koi to consumers, do so with grace and confidence. Do not chase the fish. Instead, ease them into a net or show bowl for viewing. Realize that the oxygen level can drop very quickly in a show bowl, so do not leave fish in a bowl for an extended time. Replenish the water if necessary. Use a sock net when handling koi for your customers to avoid accidentally damaging their new pets.

Remember to cover the show tanks with a net when unattended, as koi tend to jump in new surroundings. Lastly, always maintain good water quality during a koi show, and don’t overload the tanks. Daily water changes are expected as proper koi show etiquette.

Nothing is a bigger turnoff to consumers than a tank of dirty, smelly fish water. Koi shows are a great opportunity to gain exposure for your business and increase awareness of what you have to offer. The key to a successful trade show is to start with a high-quality product and maintain its value through to the end. If you do this, then you will have a great koi show experience.

About the Author

Ellen Kloubec and her husband Myron began their aquaculture business in 1981, and their farm consists of 80 acres of mud ponds. Together with their son, Nick, they raise and supply healthy and hardy koi to wholesale customers throughout the USA and Canada. Ellen loves all things koi. www.kloubeckoi.com
New Floating Plant Island

Aquascape introduces its new Floating Plant Island, an ideal solution for displaying marginal aquatic plants in deeper areas of the pond where there are no plant shelves. The floating planter effectively keeps the soil intact and lets water in while protecting plants from fish. “Many pond owners don’t have shelves in their ponds and have been asking for an efficient way to incorporate marginal plants into their water gardens,” states Scott Rhodes, Director of Product Marketing for Aquascape, Inc. “Our Floating Plant Island is constructed to stay afloat at the surface of the pond and works well in all types of pond construction, including preformed ponds.” The 15-by-11-inch Floating Plant Island retails for $26.98 and is equipped with an anchoring loop for positioning plants. Extremely easy to use, the Floating Plant Island is an economical way to add the beauty of marginal plants to any pond.

Aquascape Inc.
866/877-6637
www.aquascapemin.com

IPPCA Announces New Board Members

The IPPCA would like to welcome four new Board at Large Members: Chris Their, Laguna Water Gardens; Carolyn Weise, Ecological Laboratories Inc.; Mark Lawson, Koi Depot of San Diego; and Gilbert Belcher, G&D Aquatics, Water Gardens; Carolyn Weise, Ecological Laboratories Inc.; Mark Lawson, Koi Depot of San Diego; and Gilbert Belcher, G&D Aquatics, Water Gardens; Carolyn Weise, Ecological Laboratories Inc.; Mark Lawson, Koi Depot of San Diego; and Gilbert Belcher, G&D Aquatics, Water Gardens. The association is also making plans to appoint a Vice President for the Executive Committee and two Board at Large members.

If you would like to be part of the team, please let the Executive committee know by sending an email to info@ip pca.com.

Variable-Speed Motors From US Motors

Santa Barbara Koi has had a working relationship with US Motors for 3 years, working on the development of variable speed motors for our koi ponds. It has been a fruitful relationship, as US Motors has just released a product that is ideal for ponds.

The variable-speed motors now have an adjustable priming speed, allowing for seamless installation on all pond filter systems. This is important as variable-speed motors save so much energy, as compared to conventional 1,750- and 3,450-RPM motors. These new motors also have built-in electronic time clocks, which give the customer the option of using lower motor speeds in evening hours. Speaking of saving energy, when these motors are matched up with Waterways SVL, Wet Ends (pumps), it becomes one of the most energy-efficient pump systems available. In addition to their efficiency, they also run very quietly, making it an ideal setup for the garden.

As with all of our products, we stock every replacement part necessary for these wonderful variable-speed motors, new from US Motors Inc. Call today to see how these motors can start saving you money on your electricity bill.

Santa Barbara Koi
805/582-2256
www.santabarbarakoi.com

New Osmosis Water Purification System

Aquatic Life, LLC has introduced a new reverse osmosis (RO) water purification system, RO Buddie™. This new product provides economical filtered water using a three-stage system. Using carbon and sediment cartridges with a central membrane, the RO Buddie™ removes harmful substances such as heavy metal ions and total dissolved solids from tap water. The RO Buddie is a great option for use in hydroponic applications. Available in 50 and 100 GPD models.

Aquatic Life, LLC
Toll Free: 888/548-3480
Local: 818/768-6943
www.aquaticlife.com

New Vianti Falls Six-Inch Extended Lip Spillways

Vianti Falls six-inch extended lip spillways are now available in complete kits. The Vianti Falls design features a trouble-free stainless steel spillway, optional LED light strip, basin, pump and plumbing. Runner up at the 2011 Irrigation Association show in new product specialty category, Vianti Falls kits are energy efficient and easy to install.

Available in 11-inch, 23-inch and 35-inch complete kits, the new six-inch extended lip Vianti Falls system make it easy to add a splash to your next landscape installations.

EasyPro
800/648-3873
www.easypropondproducts.com

Winning Gourmet Fish Food

Offering a gourmet food with all the special attention to formulation given to the much more expensive foods. The fact that it is milled with whole krill, wheat germ and essential minerals. This is a pellet that is non-clouding and long-floating. Winning Gourmet contains whole krill, wheat germ and essential minerals. This is a nutritional formula with stabilized vitamin C and more color enhancers. The small pellets are non-clouiding and long-floating. Winning Gourmet is available in 8-ounce and 16-ounce sizes.

Auraco, Inc.
855/514-3370 (Toll Free)
www.auraco.net

New from US Motors Inc. Call today to see how these motors can start saving you money on your electricity bill.
Alaska Brand Offers Hydroponic Gardening Solution

An all-natural plant food made from North Atlantic Sea Kelp, Alaska by Pennington Pure Kelp Plant Food 0.13:0.6:0.60 feeds plants with 11 essential nutrients to enhance strength and vigor. The water-soluble, easy-to-use liquid concentrate formula is ideal for use in hydroponic gardening systems as a root and foliar feeding supplement and indoors year-round.

The Alaska brand has provided gardeners with highly effective, natural and organic fish and plant-based alternatives to synthetic fertilizers for decades. The low-odor formulas can be used in organic gardening on all types of plants and landscapes.

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Alaska products are currently available nationwide at national home retailers, as well as select regional and independent retailers. MSRP: $9.00-$13.00 (32 ounces)

Central Garden & Pet www.central.com

2013 Blue Thumb Pond Expo

Blue Thumb Distributing announces a change of date for the annual Pond Expo, moving the date into early fall to accommodate distributors, contractors and retailers interested in growing their water feature businesses. Join industry professionals and over 20 manufacturers as Blue Thumb celebrates 10 years of Pond Expo! The Pond Expo is being held at Blue Thumb Distributing located in Saginaw, Mich. on October 10th. It is an all-day event, focused on strengthening your skills of sales, marketing, and construction in Saginaw, Mich. on October 10th. It is an all-day event, focused on strengthening your skills of sales, marketing, and construction of the six most popular types of water features.

Water garden retailers should attend the Pond Expo to place Early Buy Orders, receive cash-sllips and become eligible for over $5,000 in door prizes. Contractors experience hands-on training, receive technical advice and leave with plenty of sales material to help secure their next projects.

Blue Thumb Distributing invites all of you to attend our BIG 10-year Anniversary celebration where you will find, in the words of one last season’s attendees, ‘Great Staff, Great Give-Aways, Vendors and Product!’

For free registration, contact:
Aaron Scarlata,
Aaron@mipond.com
www.mipond.com

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Hey, this isn’t too bad!

Photo by Benjamin Timmermans
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