



the historical & philosophical **roots** of pond building

To set the historical stage, equipment manufacturers (and their customers) in the water gardening industry have evolved from two primary sources, namely the water filtration industry (i.e. waste water treatment) and the swimming pool design/sterilization orientation.

The Water Filtration Orientation

The water filtration types (comprised mostly of engineers) have jumped on the bandwagon, thinking that the pond business is mainly a matter of cleaning up dirty water. If you're in the sewage disposal or the bottled water market, you'd be right. But, if you're in the pond construction business, you'd be, at best, misdirected!

Their primary focus, right from the get-go, was to filter more and more junk out of presumably dirty water and, in the process, bring the public a cleaner, clearer pond. This group assumed that whoever developed the best water filter would

win the water gardening race. That was, and still is, the predominant orientation to the water gardening business.

The Swimming Pool Orientation

The swimming pool design/sterilization types, on the other hand, took a little different track. Their strategy, predictably enough, was to add chemicals to pond water in order to sterilize or alter it. So, guess where all the UV light sterilizers and pond chemicals come from? If you answered, "from the swimming pool orientation," you're really starting to get the hang of this game.

The primary focus of this group, as dictated by their background concepts, was to create a sterile, or chemically dependent pond. They assumed that whoever developed the most effective chemical sterilizer would win the water gardening race. That's the second predominant orientation to this business.

The Third Paradigm

Aquascape! Now, we'd like to stop right here to really emphasize that virtually every manufacturer in the entire water gardening industry has its core beliefs in one of those two places (water filtration or sterilization)...with the exception of one—Aquascape. We've pioneered a third orientation to the water gardening business that aims to work in harmony with Mother Nature, not against her, by creating a "balanced ecosystem" in the first place! In our view, this organic orientation separates us from every other manufacturer in the market, and is responsible for our meteoric rise in this industry. Here's why.

We came into the water gardening market from a completely different angle. The Pond Guy™ built a pond in his family's backyard when he was 12, and he worked on it for a number of summers throughout high school. More and more people saw and admired his handiwork.

More and more interest began to develop in his pondering activities, until one day ...he spotted a business opportunity on his horizon.

At that point, he was not an engineer looking to filter dirty water, nor a swimming pool guy looking to chemically sterilize pond water into submission. He was just a kid, a hobbyist, who'd built his first pond to house critters that he had adopted. When he started building ponds for other people, his goal was to build ponds that were...

- Beautiful and enjoyable.
- A good home for critters.
- Efficient to install.
- Profitable to build.

Notice, there's nothing about filtering or sterilizing dirty water in any of this! That's why we call it "the third paradigm." It represents a new set of eyes. It's what is now called an "outside the box" or a "renegade" perspective. And to be honest, we've grown kinda fond of our politically incorrect, outside the mainstream, counter-conventional, outlaw reputation in the industry.

What This Third Paradigm Does for Our Business (and Yours)

Let's think about this for a minute. What does this third paradigm perspective do for both of our businesses? To begin with, it forces us to see the business from a big picture perspective instead of from the keyhole, "keep the blinders on me, please," perspective which is so characteristic of our competition. It allows us to see that our customers aren't into single issues like the high-tech art of water filtration or chemical water sterilization. They're into the total, overall benefits and the lifestyle of pond ownership!

When we consult, we almost never talk about technicalities. Our system has been specifically designed for



*A pool filter works just fine
IN A POOL, but fish don't
live in pools! When you build
a pond use a pond filter.*



A) In-pond pumps clog and are outdated. **B)** Concrete ponds are costly and unnatural, plus they're prone to leaks. **C-D)** Filter systems you see may or may not help the pond but they are always ugly!



water garden installation and maintenance. Yes, it cleans dirty water and does a great job at it. That is only one of the benefits. We believe we make the best, and most practical, water filtration system on the market, given our application (not sewage treatment, water bottling, or pool installation, but pond installation).

Even though we believe we have the best system out there, we hardly ever mention it when we sell a pond. Why? Because the customer doesn't care about technicalities! Our ponds feature natural, crystal-clear water, and that's very important to a pond owner. That is only one by-product of our organic orientation to pond building. It's not our total focus! And if you're in the pond business, it shouldn't be your focus either!



*Where's the beef? It's in there,
you just don't see it. Isn't that the
way it should be, anyhow?*



Our customers, most customers, want a pond that is as natural and low maintenance as possible!



Photo by Heiko Spattek



Customers Want Benefits, Benefits, Benefits!!!

What are customers interested in? They're like customers in any other business. They're basically interested in three things, benefits, benefits, and benefits! They want to hear about...

- The low pond maintenance.
- The relaxing and fun times that they and their family will have.
- The happy, healthy, and thriving wildlife that their pond will accommodate.
- The incognito character of our BIOFALLS® filter and skimmer (you can't see 'em).
- The durability of our filtration system –no moving parts means no problems.
- And of course, the naturally crystal clear water.

But if you focus on the clarity of the water ONLY, you're not in the pond installation business. You're in the water filtration or sterilization business!

As an analogy, imagine that you were trying to sell a car and all you talked about was the engine. You ignored the transmission, the anti-lock brakes, the user-friendly and people-friendly design, the mega trunk space, the beautiful lines, and the joy of driving the car. Do you think you'd succeed in the car business? You may be in the "engine" business, but not in the "car" business...right?

The point here, of course, is that there are lots of different and inter-dependent elements that go into the beauty and enjoyment of owning a car. To focus on one factor, and one factor only, is missing the forest for the trees.

The water gardening construction business is no different. If you don't recognize that you're in the pond construction or retail business, and not in the water filtration or the swimming pool business, you're doing yourself and your business a disservice. You'll never reach your full potential because you're not focused. You're diluted.

Why Does the Competition Fail to See This Dilemma?

“All this sounds so simple,” you say. “Why does Aquascape’s competition fail to see the third, big-picture paradigm, and take advantage of it?”

There are several answers to this question. First, when you have built your business on a particular foundation, it’s very difficult to admit, mid-stream, that you’ve been on the wrong track all along, and to turn your ship in the right direction. For some people it’s hard to say, “I’m wrong.” And it’s even harder to confess that the other guy, your competitor, has been right the entire time.

Second, we have a crew that actually builds ponds, so we’re aware of what the challenges are out in the field. That company is Aquascape. Others build water filtration systems, widgets, gadgets, and develop chemicals to clean dirty water... but they don’t build water gardens! They don’t build ponds!

That’s right, nobody else brings the actual real-time, hands-on, experience to the table. They just keep trying to make better widgets, gadgets, and chemicals to filter dirty water. Their focus is misdirected and they don’t even know it! Widgetry and gadgetry is not what the water gardening business is about.

If you’re not out there rolling up your sleeves, working up a sweat, excavating lawns, hauling gravel, placing systems, liners, and rock, and interacting with real, live customers, then perhaps you just don’t know! You may think you know, but in reality you’re only guessing... and “guessing” is often a fatal disease in business.

Join Aquascape’s Third Paradigm Revolution!

In any business, if you expect to succeed, you’d better be focused. You’d better have a pretty solid idea of where you’re headed, and all the main steps from point A to point Z outlined (or steps 1 through 20 in our case). And, if you find that you’ve miscalculated the trade winds, having a strong sense of your end goals will allow you to recalculate, and get your water gardening ship back on track.

More specifically, we suggest that our undiluted focus on what our customers actually want (the ability to build a beautiful and func-

tional pond, profitably), instead of what some theorize they ought to want (i.e. sterilized or mega-filtered water in the back yard) is the main difference between Aquascape and all the rest of our competitors. This focus has allowed us to stay on track in terms of our product development, product support, and satisfying customers.

We understand what water garden consumers want, and have capitalized on it, to become the country’s largest water garden builder. This concentrated focus is what has made us the 9000 lb. gorilla in this market, and will keep us there until the competition wakes up and smells the coffee. So far, the only response to our growing success has been a constant harping about, and criticism of, our unconventional approach.

So there you have it. Now you have a choice to make. If you actually feel that you’re in the business of filtering dirty water, any one of the myriad of water garden manufacturers can supply you with products to do that. If you understand that you’re in the business of selling beautiful, easily maintained, and completely functional water gardens, then we’d love to have you join *The Aquascape Revolution!*

Carpe Diem (Seize the Day)!

