

Business Barometer July 2010

Water Garden News regularly surveys pond and water garden companies about their business climate and sales trends. Respondents are granted anonymity. These responses came from a May 21 survey.

June 23, 2010

Supplies, Water Features Up

A full-service retail and construction company in Freeport, Ill.

Business is up substantially over last year. If the economy continues to improve, and the unemployment rate goes]down, we expect an increase in business.

Customers are buying supplies, and we have several new pond construction jobs. Water features, particularly stainless steel varieties, seem to be doing well, too.

Service work is up this season. The more work you put in, the more service work you get. Our clientele have to maintain their ponds; they have to keep them running.

We have 1,500 business clients, and we're doing 50 to 60 ponds a season. Unless something happens with the economy, we should continue to see growth.

Sales Off, Some Improvement Seen

A water garden retailer in Sacramento

Business isn't wonderful, but we've seen a little progress in recent weeks. Sales are little better than last year.

We sell a lot of water plants for ponds in early spring, but it's been so cold and rainy that people haven't started doing that yet. The plants haven't started either. We expect business to pick up from now on.

People are buying smaller, less expensive things, such as smaller fountains and water falls and the least-expensive plants. People like to buy things, so they're willing to spend a little money.

We're hoping for the best, and the little bit we've seen already seems better than last year. Things are turning around.

Improved Demand for Fish, Plants

A pond builder in Athens, Ala.

Business has been good. Customers are maintaining their ponds and there is some construction happening.

People are interested in plants and fish a lot this year. Maintenance supplies are selling right now, and some customers are adding some things to their features, such as filters and UV.

Small Features Popular, Sales Down

A home and garden retailer in Crivitz, Wis.

We're experiencing a third of our business compared with previous years. Sales remain slow.

Our area is experiencing high unemployment, so people are being conservative. They want the sound and the effects, so they're going for the smaller water features. Pondless features are big probably because of the ease of maintenance.

If business doesn't pick up, it will be a down year for us.

Building Boom of Delayed Projects

A design and construction company in Belle Mead, N.J.

People are spending more than last year, but they're moving forward cautiously. I'm double-booked now, and I'm trying to figure out how to keep up without expanding. I can't keep up with business.

There's a sector of the market where people are starting projects that they put off last year, so they're extra anxious because they lost a year. I've got several renovation-type jobs, rather than big things.

Business finished up a bit slow last year, but clients are starting to wake up. I'm not holding any expectations for the future. I work as hard as I can as much as I can and hope everything continues.

No Drop in Business
A nursery in Austin, Texas

Business could always be better, but it's doing pretty good for this time of year. People are buying the same stuff they always buy — plants, trees, shrubs, everything we sell pretty much.

Our business runs about the same each year. We don't vary too much from department to department.

Last year was pretty poor in the summer, so I expect the rest of the year to be an improvement over last year.