

Business Barometer May/June 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 March 26 survey.

April 22, 2010

Long Winter Leads to Busy Spring
An aquascaping business in Metairie, La.

The construction of water gardens and waterfalls is in demand. It's been a long winter, but business is good in spring.

We're working on some upscale pond projects, as well as landscaping projects and outdoor lighting jobs. There's been a push in everything.

People still opt to invest in backyard living instead of taking expensive vacations. It's great for my business.

I'm projecting to make a decent profit if the rest of the year keeps going the way it is now. This is a welcome change from the slow winter season.

Water Garden Business Up Slightly
A water garden retailer in Hermon, Maine

Compared to 2009, business is flat, maybe up a little bit, which is better than down. People are loosening up their wallets, and attitudes are improved slightly.

The top sellers right now are tropical plants. Customers also are buying more basic foliage plants.

People are falling back on tradition, and it all seems to be back to basics. For example, they're buying potting soil and re-potting plants instead of buying new ones.

From Weak 2009 to Strong 2010
A garden and pond center in Lansing, Ill.

This year seems to be heading in a better direction than 2009. People are cranking up fast with a lot of pond installations.

Customers are buying chemical water treatments. They're more aggressive when shopping. They are not holding back as much anymore. Sales definitely are stronger in this year.

Uptick in Do-it-Yourself Projects
A garden center in Swanton, Vt.

Business is OK. We are fractionally ahead of last year, and maintain a positive outlook.

We're experiencing springlike weather here in New England, and people are buying seeds to grow flowers and vegetables.

There's a ton of do-it-yourself projects, such as planting edible gardens. People want to be able to feed their families and be self-sustained. They also want to capture rainwater, and they don't want to put chemicals on their lawns.

Customers want organic fertilizers and other natural garden products. We're carrying rain barrels and educating customers on efficiency.

A Trend in Higher-Grade Koi
A koi and pond equipment retailer in Salt Lake City, Utah

Everyone seems to be looking for higher-grade koi and getting more selective. Generally our customers are collectors, and we're seeing a pretty good jump in upgrades to their filter systems and pumps.

We're doing more efficient pumps and better filtration systems. This includes doing more with external centrifugal pumps, because these are more energy-efficient.

Something new we're doing this year is pond-building seminars with local water garden shops. Hopefully, this will attract more business.

Sales Up Especially in Upkeep
Water garden retailer in Livermore, Calif.

People are looking at water features for their yard now that the weather is warming up in Northern California. Compared to last year, people seem more interested in having a water feature installed. They want to maintain or clean up their current features.

Sales are up with top sellers in pond maintenance materials. People are waking ponds up from winter and getting them cleaned up to get them going again. We anticipate a better year than 2009.