

Customers Rave About Floating Islands

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(Courtesy of Mike Garcia)
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survival? Diversification.

An easy way to diversify your pond and water garden business is to offer something new, like floating islands. I planted a vegetable garden in my floating islands this year. In view of the economic challenges we continue to face, what is the key to business

Do you have to add a new division to your existing pond or water garden business to diversify? No. Diversification can be as simple as adding a new offering to your existing clients.

I began offering floating islands to my clients. My first introduction to floating islands occurred while walking the aisles of Pondapalooza last year. The beautiful photos of flowers and turf floating in the middle of ponds and water gardens drew me.

The floating islands are made of a pond mat with a pond-foam type material sandwiched in the middle. This creates a floating filter mat that can support the weight of garden soil and plants on top.

The plants receive water through the wicking action of the pond water from the bottom. The plant roots that grow through the bottom of the device provide a treat for koi and pond fish to nibble between meals.

The reason I decided to give floating islands a try is three-fold. They look great in a pond. They help shade ponds located in full sun, thus reducing the amount of algae produced by the sun. They absorb excess nutrients in the pond, thus reducing the sludge build up. The results are incredible!

I also decided to be more creative with my floating islands. Usually I plant the usual suspects, such as impatiens, wild flowers and turf. This year, I planted a vegetable garden.

On one island I planted a cherry tomato plant. I planted lettuce and a strawberry plant on the other island. The results were astounding!

For the past 12 weeks, I have harvested cherry tomatoes every week. The strawberries have never tasted so good, and the lettuce was great for a few salads.

Floating islands make a great add-on to your pond and water garden business. I suggest keeping several in stock because they seem to be a real impulse buy. Although they are a newer innovation to the pond world, floating islands are somewhat recession-proof due to their low cost.

Also, many calls from the landscape side of my business are for the installation of vegetable gardens. Typical vegetable gardens require you to install sprinklers. With floating islands, you plant it, put it in the water and you're done. There is no need to till the soil or add sprinklers. This is a real "green" add-on to your business.

What are some of your creative experiences with floating islands?