

Pond-trade Certification

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As a water garden professional, nothing happens until I make a sale or get a contract signed. The art of making a sale is a process that includes building trust between myself and a potential client. Nobody does business until establishing trust.

Part of the trust-building process includes establishing your credentials as a professional. What makes a person a professional?

Education? Experience? Both?

There is no doubt that both education and experience make up part of the process of becoming a professional. A relatively recent development in this regard is the certification process offered by manufacturers and associations. Certifications give people a degree of professionalism in the public eye.

The pond world has several certifications. Some are offered by pond associations and others by manufacturers. International Professional Pond Contractors Association offers the Certified Professional Pond Contractor program, and National Association of Pond Professionals provides the Basic Level 1 Test (passer). Passing IPPCA's test certifies a person as a pond professional, while NAPP's test does not.

Irrigator Tech, another professional organization, expects to create a test in the near future. Manufacturers Aquascape Inc., Atlantic Water Gardens, EasyPro Pond Products and Savio also offer tests, which certify passers as competent to install their products. Certifying with one manufacturer might limit a professional, if a client wants another brand of product installed.

I think we need a standardized, pond-trade certification performed and monitored by a neutral governing entity. What are your thoughts about certification?