

## Surviving Your Water Garden Career

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Water gardening might be new and developing in the United States, but it hardly ranks as the pet rock of the landscape world. (courtesy photo) Some folks think of water gardening as a flash-in-the-pan hobby. It appears to be "all the craze," but in the end, will it be another Pet Rock?

Ornamental ponds and water gardens have been around since ancient times. The pond and water garden industry might be new and developing in the United States, but it has remained extremely popular in Europe and Asia for generations. The main difference, and one that we should capitalize on, is that now the average person can own a water feature.

If the ancient Egyptians could build water features that still work today, why can't we? Further, many of the palaces in Europe contain operational water features designed and installed from the mid-16th century, and they didn't even have electricity then!

We are not reinventing the wheel. Ponds and water gardens make up a popular segment of the landscape industry. Its popularity in the American market is limited only by our creativity and the ability to install a quality product that will stand the test of time.

I remember vividly when I was a young, U.S. immigrant, newly married and building our first house. I called my wife at work one day to complain that I was at the building supply store and no one would give me a 100-year warranty on my roofing materials. My wife laughed when she asked if I planned to be around in 100 years to collect if something went wrong.

Coming from England, where the average home might be hundreds of years old, things are built to last several generations. I have every reason to expect my purchases and my projects are quality built.

I am in this business for longevity. While I endeavor to be culturally relevant -- I might sell a water feature with a trendy twist -- I focus on quality and professionalism.

If I sell quality fish with a life expectancy of 50 years or more, wouldn't it stand to reason that the ponds I build also would be expected to last that long? If that is my market, then the pond and water garden industry certainly is not a craze or a fad.

The next time you hear that one-hit wonder "I Will Survive," smile to yourself and remember that your career is the survivor. The pond and water garden industry has been around in other parts of the world for thousands of years, and it is here to stay.