

Pond Industry Pioneers Make a Difference

Insiders recognize more leaders who changed water gardening in the past decade.

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To celebrate the 10th anniversary of Water Garden News, the magazine featured 10 expert-recommended pond and water garden industry pioneers (slideshow) in the April issue. With so many individuals deserving recognition, the editors continued the list here. *Note: Names appear alphabetically. Anthony Archer-Wills placed rocks using techniques that inspired pond builders and designers nation-wide. Roseanne Conrad, former publisher of Pond-Keeper magazine. She produces Pondapalooza National Pond Expo & Conference through Garden Pond Promotions Inc. Joe Decker, a water feature contractor in New Jersey who invented the pond skimmer and inspired Greg Wittstock, of Aquascape Inc., to distribute it on a large scale. David B. Duensing & Associates, a group of water feature designers and landscape architects that changed the way water integrates into the environment. Laurence Gedye (deceased), an Australian who was one of the first to attach a pump to a filter and was a prolific waterlily hybridizer. Robert "Bob" Heideman founded Aquatic Eco-Systems Inc., one of the largest sources of aquatic products and systems worldwide, boasting 13,000 products for ponds, aquariums and aquaculture in its annual "Master Catalog." Barre Hellquist, Ph.D., a professor of biology at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, is one of the world's experts on aquatic plants. Bill Heritage is an Englishman who promoted using a flexible liner more than 20 years ago. He also wrote "Ponds and Water Gardens" (Poole, 1981). Rocke Huntington, International Professional Pond Contractors Association president, helped launch the organization. Eric Johnson, DVM, a leading authority on koi health. Dave A. Jones, International Professional Pond Contractors Association chairman of the board and president of The Pond Professional, continually works to establish uniform pond-building standards for the industry. Ron Malone, Ph.D., inventor of the bubble-bead filter. His work in the aquaculture industry largely affected the water garden industry. Brad McLane, owner of Florida Aquatic Nurseries, is a hybridizer and leading producer of aquatic plants. Kip Northrup, president of Blue Thumb Distributing, shook up the way pond products were distributed in the industry by acting as middleman between the pond owner and the contractor. Contractors gave pond owners Blue Thumb's catalog, homeowners ordered direct from Blue Thumb and contractors received a commission check from the sales. Ben Plonski, owner of Matala USA and Laguna Koi Ponds, developed innovative filter media and changed koi pond filtration. Craig Presnell, with Luster Aquatic Nursery, is a hybridizer and leading producer of aquatic plants. Herb Simmons introduced koi pellets as a reliable diet for pond fish. Greg and Sue Speichert founded Water Gardening magazine and American Water Garden Society. They popularized water garden plants through Crystal Palace Perennials, their Indiana nursery. Deb Spenser and Susan Davis of Water's Edge continually push the envelope when it comes to selling the pond hobby. Their pond designs, retail displays and merchandising ideas have inspired hobbyists as well as fellow retailers. Kirk Strawn, Ph.D., (deceased) was a founding member of International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society and a premier hybridizer of hardy waterlilies and irises. Charles Thomas, former president of Lilypons Water Gardens, was a founding member of International Waterlily and Water Gardening Society. Eric Triplett, owner of Exotic Aquatics in Redlands, Calif., has worked to unify the water garden and koi pond industries. Peter Malcolm Waddington, a British koi enthusiast who wrote "Koi Kichi" (Gardners Books, 1999) and co-wrote "Koi 2 Kichi" (Nishikigoi International Ltd., 2005), impacted the U.S. koi market by introducing the hobby to laymen in an approachable and humorous way. Slearmlarp "Sam" Wasuwat, Ph.D., of Thailand transfused Asian ideas and influences into the North American water gardening scene.