

What Pump Warranties Mean to Pond and Water Garden Customers

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Years ago, few pond and water garden pumps featured more than one-year warranties. Today, many pond and water garden pump manufacturers guarantee their products for two, three and even five years.

To pond and water garden owners, the warranty length equals quality, said Jason Blake, president of The Pond Guy in Marine City, Mich. The longer a pond and water garden pump manufacturer guarantees its product, Blake said, the more confidence hobbyists' show in investing in it.

"Unless a consumer has been in the hobby for a long time or does a lot of research, the warranty explains the quality to them," Blake said. "If the manufacturer puts a three-year warranty on the pump, the consumer thinks it must be high-quality. If a consumer is looking at which pump to buy, many times he'll go with the warranty."

That same entry-level consumer also will show interest in the pond and water garden pump's price, said Curt Nuenighoff, Tetra brand marketing director at United Pet Group Inc. in Blacksburg, Va. "Having a good warranty is a good selling tool, but it all comes down to your customer profile," Nuenighoff said.

"New or entry-level customers tend to shop based on price," Nuenighoff said. "Those with more knowledge and experience in the hobby, who are looking to replace existing equipment, focus on quality and other key selling features."

Margo Bailey, owner of Water Heaven Ponds in Banner Elk, N.C., said her customers appreciate any warranty, whether it lasts one year or three. The longer the pond and water garden pump warranty, Bailey said, the more challenging it is for her to track and honor them.

"The three-year warranty causes problems because I have to mail a heavy package back to the manufacturer," Bailey said. "It's important to have something that will work for a long time for the health of the pond and my bank account."

Joe Summers, vice president of operations for Anjon Water Garden Products in O'Fallon, Mo., agreed. Summers said his pond and water garden distributors do not want four-, five- or 10-year warranty pumps because it creates a paperwork nightmare.

"The customer expects the store to know when they bought it," Summers said. "If you update your computer every two or three years, you need to update all your old files and warranty records, too."

Newer energy-efficient pond and water garden pumps feature three- or five-year warranties, while direct-drive pumps, which contain more moving parts susceptible to wear and tear, include two-year warranties, Blake said. Few pond and water garden manufacturers, if any, offer extended warranties, Blake said.

"To be considered a premium pump in the consumer's eyes, you really have to be in the two-year warranty range," Blake said. "If you want to be a premium pump, you have to be at least three. The longest warranty I know of is five years."