

THE CHARM AND CHALLENGES OF GARDEN PONDS

CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT:
The lower stream at RoHoEn, the
Japanese Friendship Garden of
Phoenix Photo by Diana Larowe



Hillwood spring at Hillwood
Estate in Washington D.C. in 2012
Photo by Bill Johnson for
Hillwood Estate



An overview of the pond at
Philadelphia's Shofuso showing
a corner of the Japanese House
Photo by K.T. Cannon-Eger



The Anderson Japanese Gardens
Garden of Reflection, built in 1999
Photo by Jeffrey R. Anderson for
The Anderson Japanese Gardens,
Rockford, IL



An overview of one section of
the four and a half acre lake at
Missouri Botanical Garden in 2012
Photo by Bill Eger



The Japanese garden shoreline
and Shoin House at Chicago
Botanic Garden in September
2011 Photo by K.T. Cannon-Eger



A non-venomous juvenile
blotched water snake *Nerodia
erythrogaster transversa* glides
along the shore at the Taniguchi
Garden in Austin, TX
Photo by K.T. Cannon-Eger

In the fall of 2013, the NAJGA Regional Conference, which was held at Shofuso Japanese House and Garden in Philadelphia, focused on ponds: how to build, maintain, and repair them and how to keep koi happy within their waters.

Dr. Seiko Goto dove in with a wealth of water history in gardens. Jim Lempl followed with construction methods that worked and those that failed. Francis Weng shared his experience with simple and fancy filtration methods. Dr. Frank Chase and Kimberly Andrews hosted an evening at Shofuso with tours, refreshments, and a garden history lecture.

The solid day of workshops was followed by a day trip to the Nisei Koi Farm, Quality Koi Company owner Joseph Zuritsky's operation in Carney's Point, New Jersey. As beautiful as those koi are, I have to say one of the biggest attractions at his farm was an up close and personal demonstration of filtration systems for the retail tanks.

All of this got participants enthused for their own gardens and brought to the attention of the Journal editorial board the bigger question: how do we learn from each other what works and what doesn't work in terms of the ponds built in a variety of climactic conditions?

Questions were posed to Japanese gardens across the nation with ponds old and new, large and small, in hot climates and in cold. The replies covered the waterfront. The following articles include techniques for improving water quality, restoring shorelines and aquatic plants, adding to hardscape, repairing leaks, maintaining historic sensibility, and choosing the right construction material.

We begin with one of the older, larger ponds where new methods to ensure water quality are now in use: Seiwa'en at The Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis.

1. Marc P. Keane, *Japanese Garden Design*, (Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 1996), 150.

“Water: the coolness, the smell, the sound, the flickering of light on the surface. The sensory qualities of water are integral in the Japanese garden...”

- Marc P. Keane in Japanese Garden Design.¹

