

On the Pond!

Orinda's first "Build a Pond Day," hosted by Garden Lights Landscape Development on May 12th, was a splashing success. There were 20 people in attendance; 4 Landscape Contractors, 4 Landscape Designers, 2 (do-it-yourself) homeowners, and 10 landscape laborers and foreman including 5 crew members from Garden Lights.

The seminar began at 9am with nothing more than a hole in the ground, a pile of dirt and lots and lots of rocks in various weights and sizes. Using the professional Aquascape pond equipment and installation system the day ended ahead of schedule at 4:20pm with water flowing down a triple falls stream and into a 13 by 9 foot pond.

Steve Lambert, owner of Garden Lights Landscape Development led the class in what he calls the fine art of water-scaping. "One of the reasons I wanted to hold this training day was to educate people on proper pond design and installation," said Lambert. "A good percentage of our pond business comes from frustrated homeowners who have a failing pond in need of repairs or rebuilding."

Participants received instruction on how to choose the best site for their water-feature and then how to design and layout their pond. Next the crew demonstrated how to properly size and layout the under layer and 45 millimeter pond liner. The liner had to be pushed into several fish tunnels that were dug into the sides of the pond and supported with 12-inch pipes. These tunnels, along with several rock shelves placed below the waterline, provide hiding places for fish that are being stalked by heron. They also serve as a place to cool off for both fish and turtles when the pond is in full sun. After the pond liner had been completely covered with rock and gravel the pond was filled while everyone enjoyed a lunch break in the Lambert's backyard garden.

Around 1:30 construction on the stream and waterfalls began. "I've been collecting special stones that have been kissed by water for about 5 years to one day add to my own water feature, said Lambert. "These rocks serve as the fall rocks and look very natural in the stream." Participants assisted with rock placement from pebble size stones to 700 pound boulders. They also helped place underwater lights in the pond and stream to illuminate the falls from behind. Two bronze Crain sculpture lights were wired and placed at the ponds edge.

When the waterfall was completed a 4000 gallon per-hour pump was installed which pulls the water across the pond then re-circulates it back up to the top of the waterfall.

After the switch was flipped to start the waterfall flowing down the stream and into the pond there were cheers and high fives all around.

The last step was to drain the pond back down to a level low enough to place water plants including; Waterlilies, water poppies, Marsh Marigolds and Louisiana Iris into pockets that were dug during the

excavation phase. The water level was then returned to normal and four koi fish were given a new home.

"I've installed hundreds of ponds for clients and finally found a way to make the time to put one in my own yard by making it an educational opportunity for colleges and water garden enthusiasts," said Lambert. "Beside, I was tired of hearing ... when are we going to get a pond? from my wife and two kids."



Moving the special rocks needs a strong arm



Installing the 4000 gallon per-hour pump



The pond is done and the water is running down the triple falls stream

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