

# Go with the flow

Water features can be soothing as well as esthetically pleasing

JENNIFER COX  
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

There's something almost hypnotic about the sound of moving water — the soft melody can create a fantastically peaceful vibe. And paired with a manicured landscape, waterfall or swimming pool, a water feature completely enhances an outdoor setting.

"Sometimes people just want the sound because it's very relaxing," said Bernard Gagnon, landscape designer at Pavage Argento. Other times homeowners are in search of recreating a natural setting in their backyard or even on their balcony (depending on the type of water feature they get).

Either way, Gagnon says that a water feature, when properly designed, requires minimal maintenance and can be enjoyed for years to come.

Ponds continue to dominate the water-feature category, offering homeowners a little piece of nature right in their own backyards. "Ponds with cascading waterfalls are certainly the most popular, (where) you can have water lilies, fish and the soothing sound of a waterfall," said Jean Brûlé, owner of Jardins Aquadesign, a pond-building and landscaping company. "Then there are pondless waterfalls for young professionals who want the look and sound of a waterfall but don't have the time to maintain a pond."

Those living in smaller spaces such as condos, or who have less to spend on such features, need not forfeit the idea of enjoying the relaxation of water.

"There are pondless fountains for those who lack the budget and/or space to build a complete water garden," Brûlé said.

Many city dwellers yearn for the freedom of swimming in freshwater bodies of water, and with swimming ponds, homeowners can enjoy a very similar experience at home. Designed with a more natural, rugged look — lots of rock and stone — and

often surrounded by greenery to give the illusion of a shore, swimming ponds have a rustic, whimsical feel to them that's completely different than conventional pools. "For people who love to swim in freshwater lakes, the swimming pond is the solution — this is basically a water garden with extra filtration provided by a wetland filter," Brûlé explained.

Many homeowners incorporate ponds into their landscapes because they enjoy fish, and there are a number of species that work well in these outdoor features.

"We're still being asked to put fish in ponds and you can get very funky Japanese fish," Gagnon said. "We get (native) plants that come from nearby rivers and lakes, and sometimes there are eggs still attached to them so homeowners will suddenly find they have fish."



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Natural elements such as a mixture of plants, stone, and a small waterfall enhance this backyard pool.

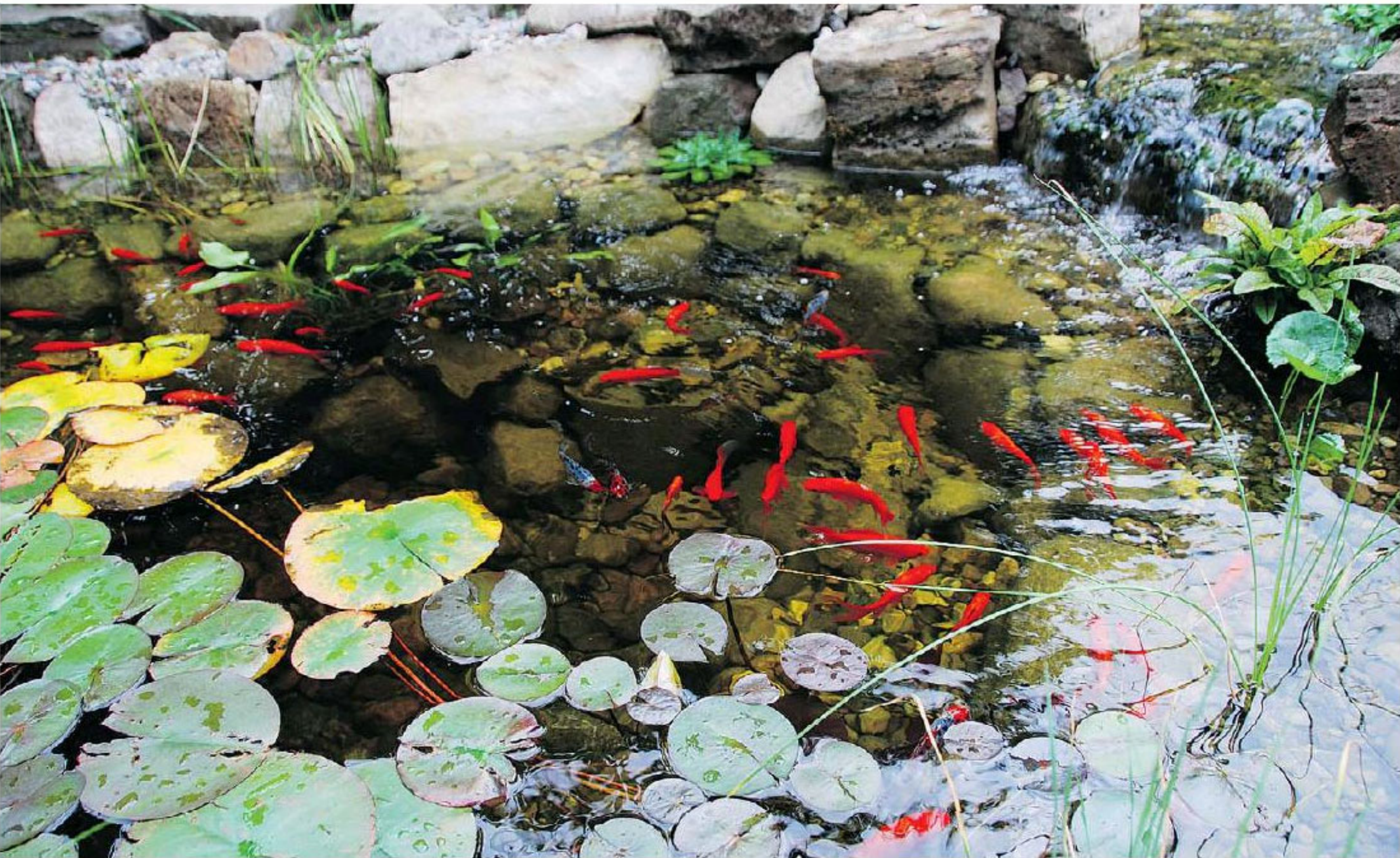
Certain species of frogs and turtles can also live happily in a properly controlled and maintained water feature.

A water feature "can transform your outdoor living space into

a little piece of paradise where you can relax and spend quality time with family and friends," Brûlé said. "Whether you have a large available area or just a small garden, you can choose from a

wide range of swimming ponds, streams, waterfalls, and fountains to complement your landscaping and lifestyle.

"Water is like a magnet: it attracts people."



PHOTOS (2): COURTESY OF JARDINS AQUADESIGN

Brightly coloured fish, a bit of a waterfall, rocks and lily pads add visual appeal to this pond in a Blainville backyard.



A pond bordered in rocks and greenery serves as a peaceful reflecting pool.