



JOE APPEL/TRISUNE-REVIEW

Homeowners Dick and Sue Hodgdon and pond builder Kevin Soergel (right) sit on rocks alongside the waterfall in the back yard of the Hodgdon's McCandless home. Soergel designed and built the waterfall, which will be featured on the "Parade of Ponds" tour on Saturday and Sunday.

## McCandless couple's water garden included among charity tour stops

GARDEN • FROM E1

"It was just weeds, some ferns and day lilies," says Dick Hodgdon, 50, who owns Franklin Electric in the North Side's Manchester neighborhood. "It was an unusable piece of space."

The couple's children — Katie, now 15, and Jon, now 17 — liked to wade their way through the brush to play in the forest behind the house and walk along a trail of switchbacks. "There was already a reason to go down there, but not really a reason to be down there," Sue Hodgdon says. "It looked like a dried-up riverbed."

The couple decided on the water garden after Kevin Soergel — who already had done the landscaping — suggested it. The garden was completed in October of last year.

"It's intimate and soothing," says Soergel, whose extended family owns Soergel Orchards in Marshall, one of the stops on the tour. "It's not like a Grand Canyon overlook; it was personally made to be intimate. I think it's a way to get away from the world."

He says that water gardens — which can cost anywhere from about \$5,000 to tens of thousands — are a rapidly growing segment of the garden and lawn care industry, likely because of the hectic nature of modern life and the need for serenity.

*"It's intimate and soothing. It's not like a Grand Canyon overlook; it was personally made to be intimate. I think it's a way to get away from the world."*

KEVIN SOERGEL

LANDSCAPER AND DESIGNER OF  
DICK AND SUE HODGDON'S MCCANDLESS  
HOME'S BACKYARD WATER GARDEN

Taking care of a water garden, surprisingly, does not disrupt that serenity, the Hodgdon's say. The waterfall and pond are self-cleaning. Electric pumps move all of the water. All the Hodgdon's have to do for weekly maintenance is to clear debris off the filtering screen by the pump.

Learning how to use and maintain their aquascape was challenging, they admit.

"It's like having a new baby," Sue Hodgdon says. "We're better at it now than we were in the winter."

*Kelle B. Gormly can be reached at kgormly@trthweb.com or (412) 320-7824.*