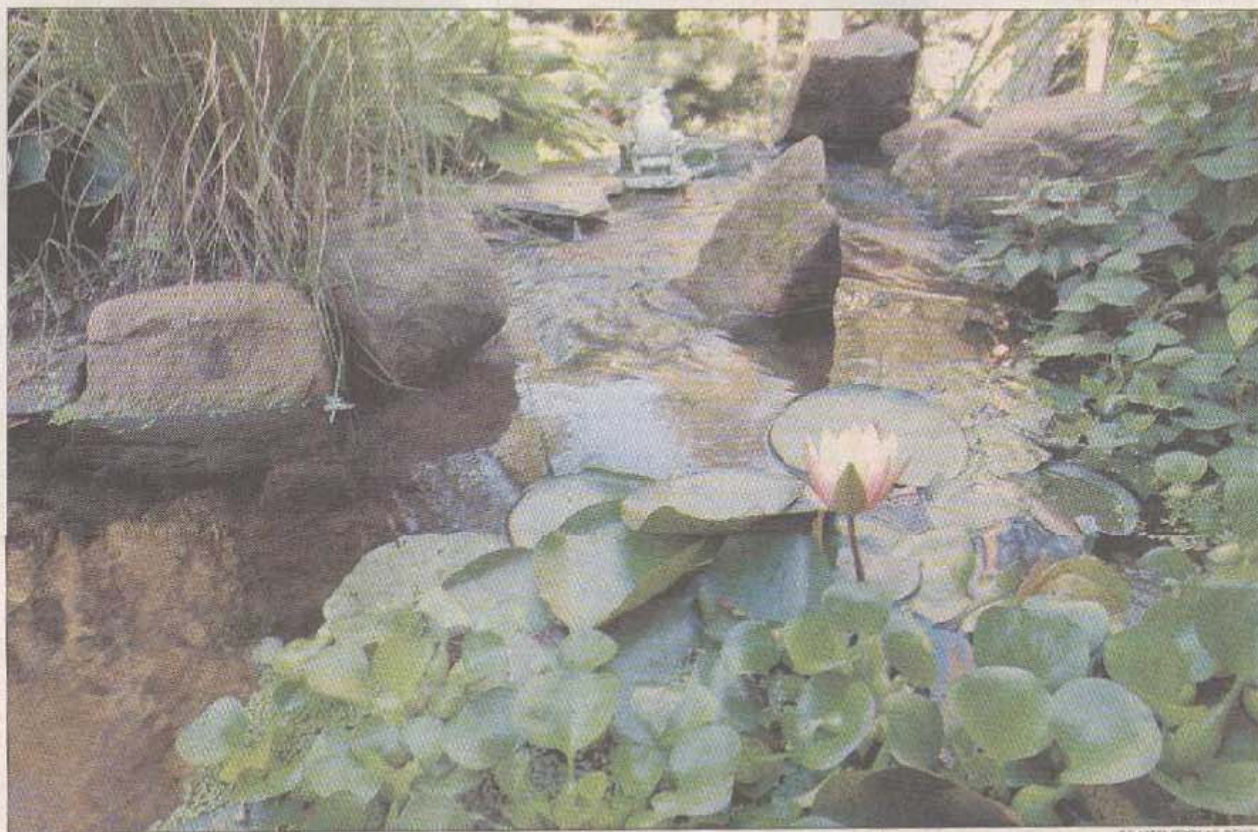


Go with the flow



JOE APPELT/TRIBUNE-REVIEW

The water garden of McCandless homeowners Dick and Sue Hodgdon will be featured on the Parade of Ponds tour.

Couple share their oft-complimented water garden on tour

Parade of Ponds features the work of Pine-based Kenneth P. Soergel & Associates.

BY KELLIE B. GORMLY
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

When Sue and Dick Hodgdon took the plunge into owning a water garden, rich vegetation and koi weren't the only newcomers to the couple's yard in McCandless.

Passersby in the neighborhood have frequently stopped at the property to view the backyard oasis. A rushing stream of water — lined with numerous plants and sandstone boulders, winds along 85 feet on the backyard hill, flows over a few waterfalls and empties into a large pond at the bottom. When standing at the pond, one cannot see the massive water stream, which tumbles 35 feet and flows under a wooden bridge.

The picturesque scene has drawn constant "Oh, my!" and "Wow!" comments, the couple says. "People say we should have people's wedding pictures taken here," says Sue Hodgdon, 52.

Next weekend, the compliments will

"People say we should have people's wedding pictures taken here."

SUE HODGDON

WHOSE MCCANDLESS BACKYARD GARDENS ARE PART OF THE PARADE OF PONDS CHARITY TOUR

flow again, because the couple is opening their home to the public. There is one of 13 residential properties, businesses and a school on the inaugural 2004 Parade of Ponds, a charity fund-raiser sponsored by Pine-based Kenneth P. Soergel & Associates.

The tour features water gardens created by Soergel's company, which aims to introduce people to water gardening while serving a philanthropic purpose, says Kevin Soergel, Kenneth's son and bolder of the Hodgdon's pond.

"It's hard to get an idea in your mind ... without seeing it first," says Soergel, 38, about the visual nature of waterfalls and ponds. He expects to take ownership of the company soon, when his father retires.

Each homeowner has picked one of 13 charities to sponsor. One of them, Voice Women's Shelter, was chosen by two homes. Monies from ticket sales for the tour directly benefit the charities. Both the organizations and homeowners are selling tickets, and patrons can choose which charity they want to support by purchasing tickets directly from that organization.

Soergel is recruiting volunteers from each charity to sell tickets at the homes and to help guide the guests.

In addition to the women's shelter, the beneficiaries are Lifeline Community Church, Richland Elementary School, Mars Public Library, St. John's Lutheran Care Center, North Hills Community Outreach, Gilda's Club of Pittsburgh, Northland Public Library, Contact Pittsburgh, MOMS Club, North Hills YMCA, and the ALS Association (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's disease).

The Hodgdon's, who chose MCMS Club, had been pondering ideas for their backyard for a long time. It was a weed-filled, untended hillside when they moved in during the mid-'80s.

Parade of Ponds

What: A charity tour of 13 destinations with water gardens

When: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Aug. 21; noon to 6 p.m. Aug. 22

Admission: Suggested donation is \$20 per family, or \$15 per person. Tickets available at any of the beneficiary organizations and at Soergel Orchards, 2573 Brandt School Road, Marshall

Where: The tour is self-guided throughout the northern area of Pittsburgh

Details: (724) 443-1051