

Water Gardens..

In sync with nature.



To me, water gardens used to be cozy ponds in the backyard with a few fish, water lilies and a battle with algae in the summer.

That was until I met Norman Tharpe. Actually, I met one of his water garden creations before I met him. I was walking toward a clients' front door, when the sound of cascading water caught

my attention. I followed what sounded like a peaceful mountain stream, and that's exactly what I found in this suburban backyard. It reminded me of those wonderful creeks and stream beds in the Blue Ridge Mountains and foothills.

It's amazing how serene and relaxing the sound of water on rock can be. When I asked my clients about their beautiful stream, filled with native plants and brightly colored koi, I was told it was created by Norman 13 years ago; with no problems or repairs and that it was easy to maintain. I had to meet Norman Tharpe and see more. Norman, who was

born and lives in Lynchburg, calls himself an artist of water garden designs. He works with nature

to create natural backyard waterfalls and peaceful mountain streams from ordinary plain landscapes. He then adds native plants to complete the paradise.

BENEFITS OF WATER IN THE GARDEN

- **Water Therapy-**

Flowing and cascading sounds of water can lower blood pressure, reduce anxiety & relieve stress.

- **Family Fun-**

Fish feeding can be a special time for parents and children to share together. Fish are like pets, they will start to come to the surface with anticipation of getting a snack.

- **Social gatherings-**

Water features are always the center of attention and become the topic of conversation. The soft sounds of water on rock, paired with night lighting sets the stage for a great gathering place.

- **Bird watching-**

Bird enthusiasts will marvel at the diversity of native birds that will frequent the pond for a sip of fresh water.



"The delight you see on a pond owner's face when they first glimpse their completed water garden is priceless" Norman said.

With more than 25 years of creating water gardens, every intimate detail is part of his artistic process. With a broad range of education on water garden plants, aquatic fish, algae, pond life, predators and diseases that can wipe out a prized collection of fish and frogs, he's a full package of know-how from start to finish.

He even volunteered at a local aquarium and fish store to learn first-hand about types of fish, how to treat disease, the optimum water conditions for healthy aquatic life, how to restore the pH of water, and the best water temperature for feeding your fish and aquatic plants.

I watched as Norman hand-picked Virginia mountain rock with natural moss and lichens at a farm in Catawba, including boulders to fist-size stones. "If it's going to look like nature, it starts with the right stone, but you

better watch it, sometimes I come across snakes like copperheads, and that's about as natural as it gets," Norman reflected as he gathered one more moss-covered boulder.

Once all the stone was selected, Norman began the tedious process of sculpting the outline of the stream and ponds. "Sometimes I need to customize concrete forms to hold the soil in place if the earth is too soft," Norman pointed out as he formed a shelf in the pond for water iris to grow. Soon the boulders and rock were placed throughout the stream, and several times he would remove one, and replace it with another until the exact look was satisfying and in sync with nature. Filling the structure with water brought the water garden to life. The cascading sounds of splashes and trickles were relaxing as the pond and stream beds filled to their brims. Finally, the finishing touches of adding landscape plantings, a cozy bench, water plants and colorful koi brought the project to completion.

In addition to a large portfolio of natural waterscapes, Norman designs formal water features with graceful fountains, restores existing water gardens, builds striking stone patios, walls and terraces, plus offers a menu of full service maintenance needs.

Having seen a number of Norman's projects from freeform to formal, "awesome" best describes his gift of emulating nature with water. So when considering adding a water element to your landscape, put your water in Norman Tharpe's hands, no matter where you are located, he will plan the right water feature that best suits your style of living.