

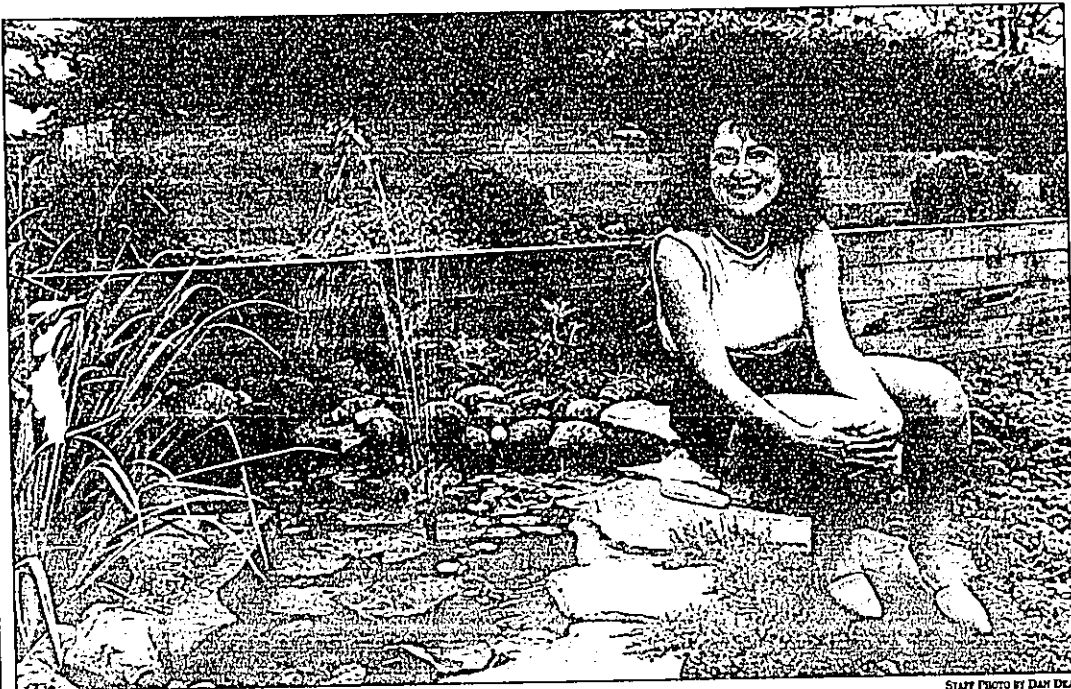
## COVER STORY

making a **SPLASH**

Paradise discovered: Karol Wilcox and her family enjoy watching the comings and goings of birds, frogs and animals to their garden pond from the breakfast table of their West Bloomfield home.



STAFF PHOTO BY DAN DEAN



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## Pond owners bubble with pleasure

By LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
SPECIAL WRITER

Garden ponds are one of the hottest trends in home landscaping next to retaining walls and brick pavers, but definitely much more pleasurable. Moving or still, water becomes the focal point of a garden by drawing the eye to its mirrored surface. By adding a few Japanese koi, goldfish and aquatic plants like water lily and hyacinth you not only create a miniature eco-system by copying a natural habitat but provide an enjoyable experience for young and old alike.

"Garden ponds began growing real strong in popularity about four years ago and have been increasing every year," said Marco Scappaticci, owner of the Rock Shoppe in Plymouth Township, where more than 35 different preform ponds are available.

"People can't walk by a pond without stopping. It's irresistible, the splashing of the water, the soothing sound of it rushing over a waterfall or a rock. It's a little corner of paradise."

For Karol Wilcox and her family, the

hardest part of installing a preform pond was digging the hole in front of their West Bloomfield home. The pond is directly outside the kitchen window, and the family is able to watch birds, frogs and chipmunks while eating breakfast. Water lilies, floating hearts, iris and grasses shade the koi fish bred for their beautiful colors and keep nature in balance.

"I like the birds and the animals that it draws in. They eat the things that grow there. It's very calming to see how life goes on. And it's great for the kids to see how this all works together whether it's feeding the fish or helping Mom with maintenance," Wilcox said. "It doesn't take that much time to maintain, about an hour a week because nature just takes over."

Mark and Terri Wolnowski agree with Wilcox that the installation of a preform pond is a quick and easy project. The couple built one into a raised bed behind their Canton Township home last spring.

Black lava rock accents the gold color of the sandstone Windsor retaining

wall. A trip to Mexico hooked them on yucca plants so three serve as focal points endowing the pond with a tropical feel. Instead of water lilies, Terri used impatiens, marigolds and vinca vine draped over the sides of the wall to add splashes of red, pink, gold and green.

"For the average person when you only have a weekend to do the project, the preform is the quickest," Mark Wolnowski said.

## Liner or preform?

Installing a preform is easier but a liner allows you to create a pond of just about any shape or size. A garden hose is perfect to outline its form. Whether you use a liner (50 cents per square foot) or a preform (starting around \$125 for a kit), a pump will keep the water recirculating. Connecting a fountain or waterfall to the pump oxygenates the water for fish and plants to produce a living habitat.

Carol Packard used a liner to build the

See POND 12D



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Water wonder: The sound and sight of water splashing from a fountain into Mark and Terri Wolnowski's garden pond is most pleasing.