

DO you really need a pond?

by Michel d'Estimauville, BSc.

Many people would like to hear the relaxing sound of moving water in their backyard, but for various reasons they don't want a pond. They may not have the space for it or there might be concerns about the safety of young children. Others just don't want a pond with fish and aquatic plants, but they want the luxury of moving water in their garden patio area.

It is for these reasons that pondless features are becoming more and more popular.

Water could be cascading down a waterfall, bubbling out of granite rocks or basalt columns, or even flowing down a babbling brook. Imagine a waterfall tumbling into a meandering creek and eventually vanishing into the gravel. These features are very similar to the conventional pond and waterfall, except that here the pond is hidden underground.

For those of you who hoped to bypass the digging process, I am sorry but you are out of luck. You will still have to dig a hole, but it will now be called a reservoir instead of a pond. This reservoir is lined with a rubber membrane and filled with gravel (usually 2 to 6 inches in diameter). The space between the rocks stores plenty of water to run your feature. However, before you back fill with gravel, a special well is placed in the reservoir. The purpose of the well is to create a cavity for the submersible pump and it allows easy access to it for servicing.

The size of the reservoir will be determined by the complexity and scope of your water project. It's a good idea to tap into the advice of an expert to help you figure out some of the finer details, but otherwise going pondless can actually simplify the project. You can even purchase attractively priced kits that assemble all of the necessary components (except the gravel) to build a perfect waterfall.

The sound of water is not only one of the most relaxing sounds of nature, it also drowns out unpleasant urban noise. Flowing water is one of the best ways to attract birds in this dry climate, as they come to drink, bathe and entertain you.

So, if you want an easy way to transform your yard into a garden oasis, introduce some cascading water.



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Pondless water features are becoming more popular, such as this meandering creek.