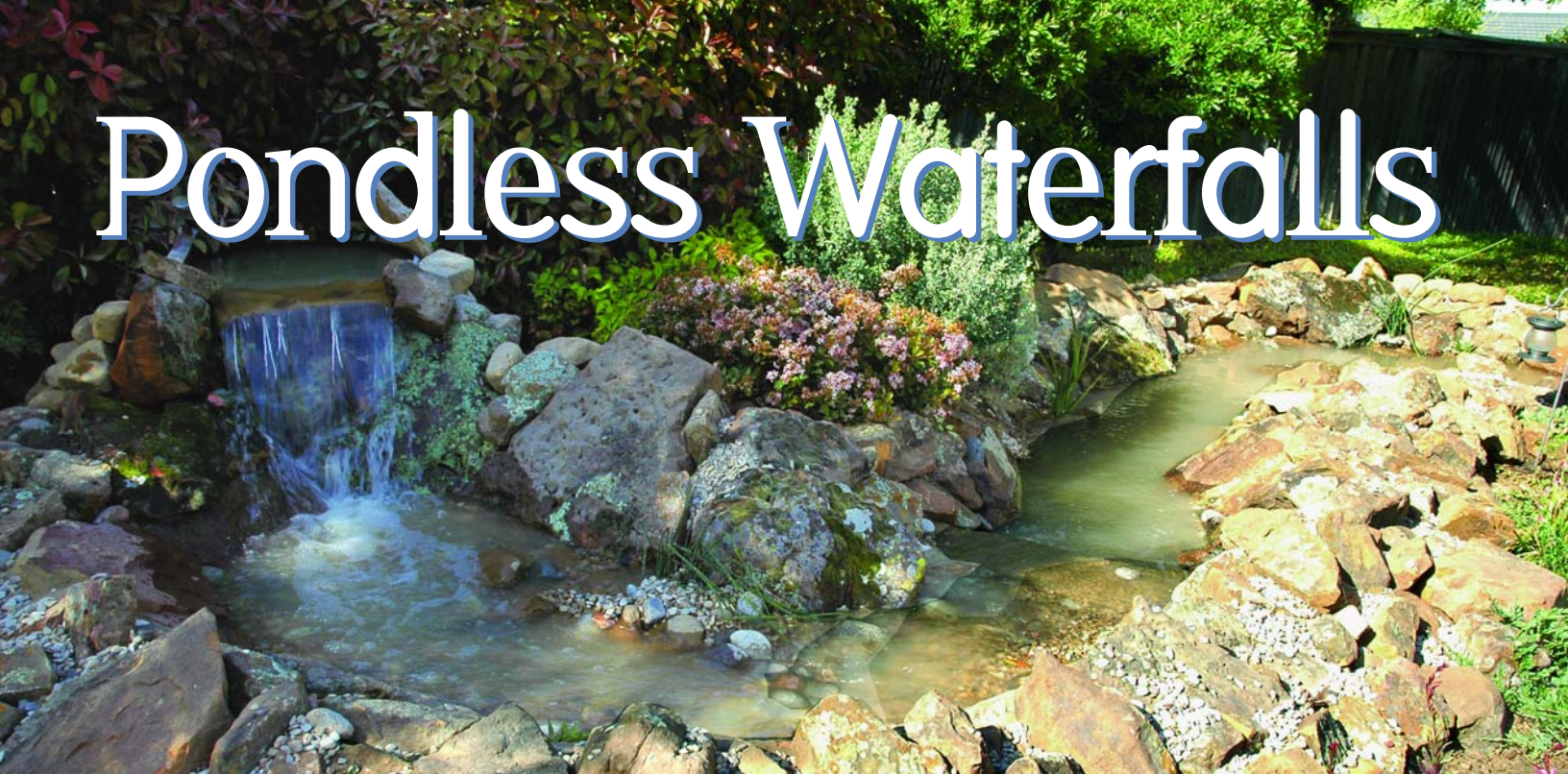


# Pondless Waterfalls



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Wonder is a great thing, especially when seen through the eyes of a child contemplating something truly fascinating. Big eyes with “ooohs and aaahs” and questions like, “where does the water go?” are common with the pondless waterfall. Whether it is a large waterfall that disappears into an unseen subterranean basin or wetlands, or a simple urn or stone ball trailing water over the side into a small pile of pebbles, the number of ways to use this feature is limited only by your imagination (or your contractor’s).

## It’s all good

The use of a water feature without a pond has gained widespread acceptance due to concerns over liability in office parks, home entry areas, front yards and concern over pets and young children. Although there have not been any cases of children or pets drowning in recreational pond features, the idea is always there, especially for the first time pond owner. There is also the unfounded concern over having to maintain or “baby-sit” and feed the fish, or keep the pond clean, rumors of UV filter complications and the list goes on. A pondless water creation has the benefits of the sound of water, stream and large waterfall, and no pond to maintain.

The construction of the pondless features varies depending upon the kind of feature desired. They may be as simple as an underground preformed Aqua blox system set in a 45mil EPDM liner and covered with beach pebbles or ornamental gravel, with your choice of pots, urns, stone ornaments, or art pieces, limited only by your whim. There are many simple systems that are self-contained and pre-packaged with a basin and fountain already included. All you do is dig the hole and add the rock.

## Do it right

The larger features should be engineered properly by a professional installer to ensure that there is adequate water storage and ease of maintenance. They can be as complicated as an underground cistern with a snorkel and centipede system with tons of rock to filter and store the water. In this type of feature, the centipede distributes the water through several layers of differing grades and sizes of stone, from large foot long cobbles, up to finishing layers of pea gravel in which you can plant. The larger the capacity of the underground storage unit, the better. However, there is no reason to worry about water supply if you attach a balanced auto-fill to your system. When installed properly, it is truly as close to zero maintenance as possible.

The water can simply drain into an underground basin or a wetlands area with blooming marginal plants such as iris, lythrum, canna, reeds and rushes. For more water action, a stream can be added to disappear into the ground or wetlands, all with no pond.

Some clients have requested large waterfalls with boulders and intricate plant pockets to complement other things going on in their yards, or just to gain the maximum sound and benefit from the larger flow of water. Others want a winding shallow stream ending in an unseen basin. No matter what you think you want, a consultation with a contractor, based upon their experience and knowledge, can often yield more ideas than you can imagine. It pays to do it right the first time, and then you can sit back and enjoy the sound, invite the birds and have a well-deserved Zen moment.