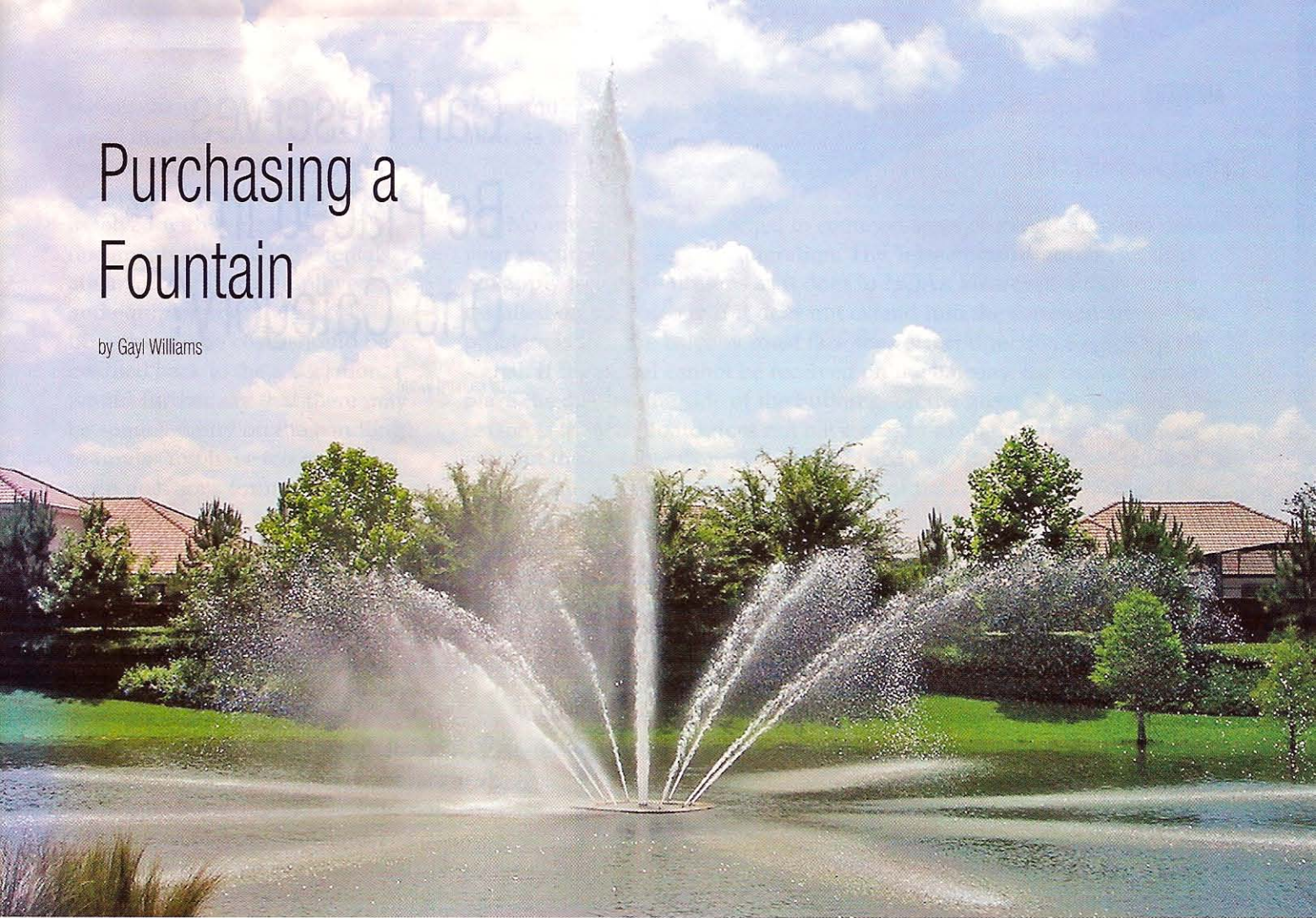


Purchasing a Fountain

by Gayl Williams



Choosing the appropriate fountain for your community or condominium takes some planning. How high do you want the fountain to go? How wide should the display be in order to be in proportion to the size of the lake? Would you like a pod jet, three-tier, or cascade display? Do you wish to aerate the lake, or are you just interested in a display?

The first consideration is to decide which display you desire. Secondly, sizing the fountain to the lake—you don't want to choose a fountain that is too small and have it look too diminutive in the lake. At the opposite extreme, you would not want the display watering the shore. Thirdly, the depth of the lake must be considered. Smaller fountains require a depth of three to four feet, while larger fountains may require six to eight feet. Finally, the power supply needs to be assessed. It should be determined if there is adequate power close to the lake. If not, a new service may be required and this should be reflected in the budget.

A wide range of displays are available, including the most popular display the three-tier. The height and width of these displays can fill a pond. At the other end of the spectrum are the cascade fountains, which are a frothy column of water. They provide the most aeration of any fountains. For a larger lake, multiple fountains work well for an interesting focal point. Many other styles are also available.

To further enhance your fountain display, lighting packages are available. The amount of lighting around the pond should be taken into consideration when sizing the fountain lighting. The brighter the background illumination, the more lighting required on the fountain for it to be seen.

Colored lenses for the lights are available and can add beauty to the fountain display. The choices from brightest to darkest are: clear, amber, red, turquoise, green, and blue. Programmable lighting can be added using any of the colors mentioned. This will create a constantly changing sequence of colors on the fountain.

Remember that fountains are mainly to beautify a lake or draw attention to a site. They do circulate some water, but are not as beneficial to lake health as a diffused air system. By using a compressor and air stones, a diffused air system is capable of circulating the water of the pond from the bottom to the surface. It also introduces more oxygen into the pond. Floating aerators are also available for shallow water applications.

Fountains and aeration systems will beautify and improve your community's lakes and ponds. With all the options available in display size and lighting, this is an excellent choice for adding interest to any landscape. Now comes the hard part, deciding which fountain is best for your community.

Gayl Williams is the owner of Lake Fountains & Aeration in Sanford, FL. ■