

A pond for wildlife

Ponds store carbon, helping to reduce global warming. “Of all the habitats that one can create to aid nature a pond is the best” (John Lewis-Stempel).

The bigger the better as larger ponds provide a variety of habitats, but any sized pond is better than none.

- Positioning is critical, part shade, part sun is important. The shade can come from tall plants at the edge of the pond.
- Depth is important for hibernating frogs, 90cms at one end or in the middle is ideal. When the pond freezes over wildlife needs water at a depth that does not freeze.
- Plan your shape to suit your site. At least 2 sides should be sloping to allow animals to get in and out. Create ledges with stones where possible.
- Flexible liners allow for maximum control of shape. Dig out the shape and line it with old blankets etc and or building sand to prevent the liner being pierced by rocks. Then put in the liner butyl or heavy duty PVC. The most natural liner is clay and this was used by farmers to make dew ponds.
- Use rainwater; let it fill up naturally to the brim.
- Animals will find their own way to your pond
- You will, however, need to plant vegetation.
- Always stock with native plants. You need plants to keep the water oxygenated and plants to keep the water free of algae.
- Marginals: marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*), yellow flag (*Iris pseudacorus*), water forget-me-not (*Myosotis palustris*) and watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*).
- Oxygenators: water milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), broad leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*), hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*).
- Emergent plants; Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*), bog bean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*)
- Floating plants: white water lily (*Nymphaea alba*), amphibious bistort (*Polygonum amphibian*).

Planting a verge of grasses and wildflowers next to the pond will help some wildlife as it emerges or uses the pond. You can plant a pond at any time of the year but autumn or winter will get it off to its quickest start.

To find out more go to:

Still Water by John Lewis Stempel: ISBN978-1-7841-6242-9. He goes into detail in the epilogue 'The Garden Pond'. He advises on which plants not to plant.

www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-to-build-ponds There is a free download 'Wild About Garden Ponds'

www.rspb.org.uk which gives advice and help on large ponds, small ponds, damp ditch and creating a bog

www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/basics/techniques/ponds_build

BE AWARE OF THE SAFETY ASPECT INVOLVED WITH YOUNG CHILDREN! Young children can drown in relatively shallow waters and this must be taken into consideration when considering the location for a garden pond. The alternative is to make a bog garden.