



Wildlife Friendly Gardening

Issue Four

Wildlife Ponds



Creating a Wildlife Pond

Ponds of any size are a valuable feature to support wildlife at home. Get started in the spring months so your plants can flourish.

For small gardens

A wildlife pond can be as simple as a watertight container such as a washing up bowl. Aim for a depth of 20cm to 30cm.

For larger gardens

A pond measuring 2m by 2m and 60cm deep provides an ideal habitat for frogs and other wildlife.

Construction tips

- Fill any holes with silicone or use a pond liner.
- Allow ponds to fill naturally with rainwater as tap water contains too many chemicals to be beneficial.
- Create varying depths using stones, bricks and aquatic compost.
- Include broad, gentle sloping margins to allow for both ease of access and escape for wildlife.



General Advice

- Avoid adding fish as they can pollute the water and eat both plants and wildlife.
- Do not move water or wildlife between ponds to reduce the risk of disease.
- If safety is a concern, you can use a wire grid to provide cover. Avoid pond netting as this can be dangerous to pets and wildlife.



Seasonal Maintenance



Spring

- Use barley straw to help control algae. [Suffolk Wildlife Trust](#) provides a helpful guide on its use.

Summer

- Top up water levels using rainwater where possible.
- Keep grassy areas around the pond for young amphibians.
- Remove excess duckweed.
- Cut back vigorous vegetation growth where necessary.
- Check for newts before removing blanketweed

Autumn

- Remove excess silt
- Clear excess leaves
- Cut back overhanging vegetation

Winter

- If the pond freezes over and is the only available water source, melt a hole using a hot pan placed on the surface
- Remove snow from the ice to allow light to penetrate the water

Pond plants

Aquatic plants provide food, shelter and breeding opportunities for wildlife.

Planting methods

- Add a layer of aquatic compost or a sand or gravel mix
- Plant at the same depth as the original container
- Firm plants into place
- Cover with a thin layer of grit or fine gravel
- Use rocks, if necessary, to stabilise the plants



Planting Ideas

Marginal Plants

- Marsh Marigold
- Water Plantain
- Lesser Spearwort

Submerged Plants

- Water Crowfoot
- Water Violet
- Pillwort

Floating Plants

- Frogbit
- Water Soldier (may overwhelm smaller ponds)
- White Waver Lily (better suited to larger ponds)

Plants Suitable for Small Ponds

- Lesser Spearwort
- Starwort
- Flowering Rush

For more information on creating wildlife ponds, please visit the [RHS](#) or [The Wildlife Trusts](#) websites.

