



How to make a pond

SKILL LEVEL: ■■■■

TIME OF YEAR: MARCH - SEPTEMBER

WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY: Ponds greatly improve a garden's wildlife potential. Even small ponds can support a rich diversity of wildlife and provide places for animals to bathe, drink and mate.

CLIMATE-FRIENDLY: A series of ponds in a neighbourhood creates essential corridors for wildlife to move and adapt to climate change. Ponds also store a large amount of carbon, helping to reduce the impact of climate change.

WHERE TO BUY MATERIALS: A large independent or local garden centre (try to shop locally where possible).

GARDEN FOR A LIVING LONDON

As our climate changes, gardens are becoming even more vital to wildlife and people.

They can provide shade, absorb carbon, soak up flood water and help to cool buildings. A well managed network of gardens stretching across the capital would also help wildlife to move more freely and adapt to climate change.

London Wildlife Trust's 'Garden for a Living London' campaign is asking Londoners to do one thing to create a wildlife and climate friendly garden. This 'How to' guide shows how to make a pond. Follow the simple tips and get your garden working to help our city and its wildlife cope with climate change.

For more information on our campaign and to pledge your support visit www.wildlondon.org.uk/gardening

Planning your pond

What type of liner? A flexible liner is more sustainable than a pre-moulded or concrete liner and creates a better habitat for wildlife. Flexible liners made from butyl are expensive but hard wearing.

Where to put a pond? Choose somewhere that you can enjoy your pond. The best place is a level sunny spot away from trees, shade, roots and leaf fall. Dappled shade won't be a problem, especially if, as expected, we have hotter summers.

What shape? Ponds with natural, undulating shapes have longer edges and greater value for wildlife.

Digging a pond

1. Mark out your chosen shape with string, a hose pipe or line of sand.
2. Dig out the shape to a depth of about 60cm. Start at the edge and work in. Save any turf to lay along the edge of the pond later.
3. Create sloping sides that support a range of plants and allow animals to get in and out easily.
4. Create varied shallow margins from 1-25cm to suit different marginal plants. This area will be warmer and encourage frogs and toads to spawn. It will also be a stable edge for mammals to drink from.
5. Vary the profile. You can create soil shelves as you dig or build ledges from rocks or stones after you have laid your liner.
6. Add a shallower boggy area near the pond edge for species to migrate into.
7. Before you lay the liner, remove roots, stones and rubble and firm the soil down.
8. Cover the hole with a 3cm layer of builder's sand followed by an underliner, such as a polyester sheet or old carpet.

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How to make a pond (cont'd)

Adding a butyl liner

1. Start at one edge and unroll the liner across your pond.
2. Make sure the liner overlaps the edges of the pond and secure it with rocks or bricks.
3. You could now add another underliner on top of the butyl for extra protection.
4. Fill the pond with water, ideally rain water collected in a water butt. The water will press the liners into shape.
5. Allow about 30cm of liner to overlap the edge of the pond. Cut any excess liner and tuck the edges under varied materials, such as stones, a pebble beach, large flat rocks, turf, logs or paving slabs.
6. Cover the liner with a thin layer of sieved soil and, if possible, add some soil from an established pond.

Adding plants

Aquatic plants oxygenate a pond and help to keep the water clean. They also provide food, shelter, shade and breeding and nesting places. Wait 10 days to allow the water and soil to settle before introducing plants. Use varied plants that are suited to the different depths in your pond.

Looking after pond wildlife

- Don't introduce frogs or other amphibians from other ponds because this can spread disease.
- Don't add fish because they will eat smaller animals such as mayfly larvae.
- Keep the grass long around the edge of your pond to provide places for animals to shelter.
- If your pond freezes, make holes in the ice to allow frogs and other animals to breathe.
- Provide long grass, and piles of stones or logs nearby for pond animals to shelter in winter.

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