

Installation and Maintenance of a Water Garden

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This article will provide some basic information and tips to help educate the individual on the installation and maintenance of a water garden. Before we get started, let me correct some of the wrongful information circulating regarding fish ponds.

- Water gardens if done correctly, will not be a high maintenance workload. As a matter of fact, it has been proven that less time is spent on a fish pond than a patch of lawn of the equivalent size.
- Water gardens do not attract mosquitoes, but quite to the contrary. Fish actually eat mosquito larvae so therefore you have fewer mosquitoes.
- Today's water garden pumps do not gobble electricity. They are very energy efficient and can operate 24 hours a day non-stop.
- Cats do not eat all the fish. My experience is that cats even though very curious are afraid and reluctant to get into the water.
- "All my fish will die." or "Will I have to bring my fish indoors during the winter?" If your pond is 18 – 24" deep the fish will survive the cold weather. They simply go down deeper in the pond where the water is warmer.

When choosing the size of a water garden, try to avoid the most common mistake made by many. It is very common to choose a pond that is too small and then regret not having made it larger.

The best advice is to choose the largest liner that space will allow and the largest that you can afford.

The next consideration is the shape and site location. You can simulate the shape of your water garden by using a garden hose and trying out various shapes until you find the one that you most desire.

In regard to site location, be sure to consider the following:

- Locate your pond in an area where you will enjoy it the most. Examples: Near a deck, family room, or patio.
- Be sure to consider the availability of electricity and water. Ground-fault interrupters are highly recommended to prevent any possibility of electrical shock.



- Refrain from choosing a low-lying area due to the possibility of water run-off that may pollute your pond and possibly kill your fish.
- Your pond should receive a minimum of 4-6 hours of sunlight per day. Remember that trees can create problems by the shedding of their leaves as well as creating excavation problems with the presence of roots.
- If digging the hole is a problem, it is possible to install your pond in a raised-bed type configuration using stones or landscape ties as the supporting walls.



As you begin to choose your liner you will be faced with the decision of whether to go with a pre-formed liner or a flexible liner. Both work very well and both come with 20 year warranties. The flexible liner however, provides the option of a custom shape as well as the option of making a deeper pond. The formula used to calculate the gallons of water in a pond is the average WIDTH x LENGTH x DEPTH x 7.5 (All in feet). You should use a submersible pump capable of circulating the total gallons of water in your pond in a 1 - 2 hour period. Filters are recommended.

The best formula for stocking the pond with fish is 1" of fish per 1 sq. ft. of pond surface.

And finally, the key to clear water in your pond is the proper amount of fish, the proper plants, keeping 50% of the surface shaded by floating plants, and not overfeeding the fish.

