



Top 10 tips for a healthy pond

Produced by: OPAL and Buglife

1. Not too neat and tidy

Try not to 'over-manage' your pond. A mixture of mud, leaves, stones, twigs and plants provide good places for wildlife to live and hide in.

2. Use a mixture of water plants

Plants are important habitats for pond animals. Try to have a mixture of underwater plants (submerged), plants with floating leaves, and plants that grow out of the water (emergent).

3. Take care where you get your plants

Some plants can grow very rapidly preventing others from becoming established. A natural, native selection of aquatic plants is best. If you are patient your pond will colonise naturally. Flora Locale (www.floralocale.org) can provide help on where to obtain plants. For information on which plants to avoid, see the Plantlife website (www.plantlife.org.uk).

4. Profitable margins

A broad margin of plants around the edge of your pond can act as a filter for water – helping to remove nutrients and chemicals. They also provide food and shelter for animals.

5. A question of shade

Trees around ponds provide shelter and their roots can provide hiding places for pond animals. However, too much shade and fallen leaves will reduce plant growth and may lead to a lot of decaying organic matter. Try to have a balance of shade and sun.

6. Don't think too deep

A mixture of shallow and deep water provides a variety of habitats for plants and animals. For a small pond, 30cm is deep enough for wildlife to flourish. For some handy hints on creating a pond see the Freshwater Habitats Trust website (www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk).

7. Take care with chemicals and fertilisers

Be careful when using pesticides, fertilisers or other chemicals near your pond. Water running off the land will carry these chemicals with them and if you use sprays near the water these can easily drift onto the water surface. Small ponds are not able to dilute these chemicals sufficiently so they will have a big impact on plant growth and the animals that can live there.

8. Avoid using tap water to fill up your pond

Tap water can contain high levels of nutrients such as nitrates, so using it to fill your pond will encourage algal growth and turn the water a murky green. If possible, use rainwater instead. Water levels fluctuate naturally so don't be worried by falling levels in summer.

9. Fish or no fish?

Although nice to look at, fish do not mix well with other pond wildlife, so avoid them if you want to attract a diverse range of wildlife. In addition, try not to transfer fish, plants and frog spawn between ponds as this can introduce diseases and problem plants.

10. Enjoy your pond

Ponds are beautiful, wildlife-rich habitats, and are the perfect place to relax and enjoy nature.

For more information on the animals that live in ponds see the Buglife (www.buglife.org.uk), ARC (www.arc-trust.org) and British Dragonfly Society (www.british-dragonflies.org.uk) websites.

Find out what lives beneath the surface of the water by taking part in the [OPAL Water Survey](#).