



Wildlife Gardening: pond building

Ponds in your garden

A pond in your garden will provide a focal point for people to watch and a resource for local animals which might include breeding dragonflies, and damselflies, spawning frogs, toads and newts, water boatmen and pond skaters.

Ponds in London

In unadulterated nature, ponds are temporary and seasonal habitats, formed in river flood plains, wetlands or loops of rivers. Most of the animals that take advantage of pond environments are able to travel by land or air and to survive late summer drought, but are not able to survive in larger or moving water bodies.

If you want to see semi-wild pond environments in London, check out www.wildlondon.org.uk to visit:

- Rowley Green Common for bog pools.
- The Chase for shallow wetlands and reedbeds
- Fishponds Wood and Beverley Meads
- A little closer to home visit Gillespie Park Local Nature Reserve for ponds and reedbeds

Perfect pond building

Perfectly place your pond

- In a fairly sunny spot, to attract dragonflies and basking frogs
- Away from trees
- Where you can sit and enjoy it
- Joined into other habitats, like meadow or marsh

Do you want your liner to last?

- Remove all stones and line the smooth dug pond hole with sand, newspaper, old carpet, or other padding to protect the liner.
- Look after your liner - unroll it into the hole, do not stretch it, or walk on it
- Cover your liner with a layer of protective overliner, if you cannot find this in your garden centre, you can use geotextile available from builders merchants. It will need weighting down in places with stones.

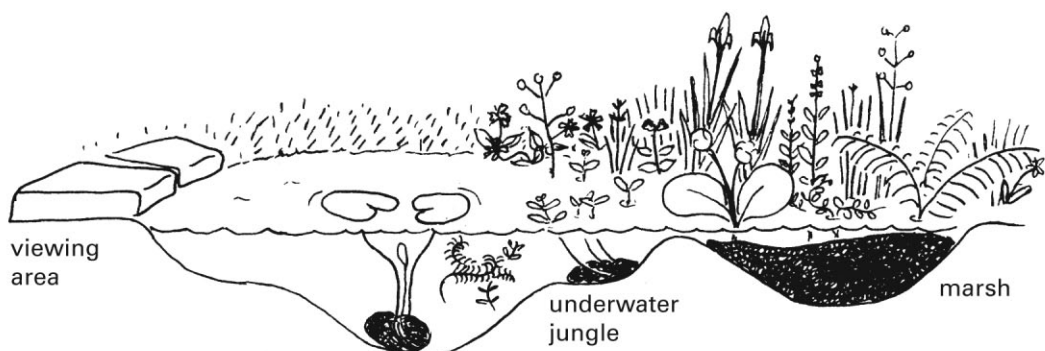
How much liner?

Measure your pond's length and width, and depth. Your liner should be

- as long as the length + the depth + the depth
- as wide as the width + the depth + the depth.
- For a small pond, allow a little more for the edges

Shop around and save money.

Liners come in different thickness, so it can be difficult to tell if you are getting value for money. Ask how long different liners are guaranteed for to compare prices, then buy the strongest you can afford.



How deep? 60 cm for a small London pond, and not too steep.

Get your levels level A spirit level and a plank will help you. Plants on a flat shelf won't slip into the middle.

For a natural look, run turf into the water along the edges.

To allow dissolved chlorine to evaporate, fill your pond with a splashing hose. Better still use rainwater from a clean gutter.

Where will you put all that soil? Try to use the subsoil to build another feature around the garden, which is less trouble and more sustainable than disposing of it.

Plants for your wildlife pond

Free floating oxygenators	Floating leaved plants	Marginals for cover in shallow water or marsh	Damp places Marsh plants
Hornwort	Frogbit	Brooklime	Purple loosestrife
Water milfoil	Fringed water lily	Bur reed	Valerian
Water starwort	Water soldier	Flowering rush	Water mint
Curled pondweed	Broad leaved pondweed *	Water forget-me-not	Water figwort
Willow moss	Amphibious bistort	Water plantain	Soft rush
Water crowfoot		Yellow flag iris	Pendulous sedge
		Marsh marigold	Meadowsweet
		Arrowhead	Ragged robin
		Bogbean *	Cuckoo flower

* = Only for larger ponds, (they get very large)

Beware!

The following are extremely invasive, and may cause a problem in your pond, or colonise nearby nature areas and block up water areas there: New Zealand pygmyweed *Crassula helmsii*, water fern *Azolla fillicoides*, parrots feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum*, Nuttall's Pondweed *Elodea nuttalli*, Marsh Pennywort *Hydrocotyle rununculoides*. Reedmace can penetrate thin pond liners.

Don't drown any hedgehogs!

If you are involved in building a pond, even one that is not intended for wildlife, please make sure it has at least one side with a good slope on it to allow animals that fall in to escape. Tragically a plank into the middle of the pond will not work as mammals will swim along the edges looking for their escape. If you inherit a steep sided pond, chicken wire or netting run down the edge will help four-legged friends climb out.

Getting Creatures for your Pond

Once you have created your pond, it will colonise naturally. Dragonflies will come and lay their eggs, frogs will appear from nowhere, and within a season there will be teeming activity under the water.

It is important **NOT TO MOVE FROGS, TADPOLES or SPAWN** from one pond to another as this spreads disease.



In partnership with



Nature Conservation Team,
Islington Ecology Centre,
191 Drayton Park,
Gillespie Park local
Nature Reserve,
London N5 1PH

T 020 7354 5162

F 020 7288 1717

E ecologycentre@islington.gov.uk

W www.islington.gov.uk