



Ecosystem Ponds and Water Features

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Give Your Pond a Spring Cleaning

As things slowly awaken from their winter hibernation, there are some things that you can do to make sure your water garden gets off to a good start this spring.

Does your water garden need a full clean-out this season or does it just need to be tidied up a little? There are a couple of things that you can look for to help you decide. First, if there is a layer of “crud” at the bottom of the pond it would be a good idea to do a full clean-out.

On the other hand, if there is just a small amount of debris that you can stir up and capture with a net and the water looks clear, a little tidying up is all that’s in order. Plan on spending a half to a full day to complete a pond clean-out.

The best time to perform a pond clean-out is at the end of winter, before your water garden completely awakens from its winter dormancy – ideally before the water temperature in the pond creeps above 12° C. If a clean-out is performed when the water is warmer, after bacteria colonies form, the balance of the ecosystem will again be thrown off and your pond will go through another “green phase” before the bacteria colonies re-establish themselves again.

Here’s what you’ll need to get started:

- A clean-out pump with approximately 4 meters. of discharge hose
- A high-pressure nozzle for your garden hose
- Garden shears for trimming plants
- A child’s swimming pool or a similar sized container to hold fish you find during the clean-out
- A net or something similar to place over the fish container
- A 20 liter bucket to collect leaves and debris
- A fish net
- Detoxifier to remove chlorine and chloramines prior to putting fish back
- Beneficial Bacteria (optional) to kick start you ecosystem

Drain the Pond

- Place the clean-out pump in the deepest point of the pond in order to remove the water.
- Drain the water into the surrounding landscape. Be sure to relocate the pipe two or three times to allow the water to seep into the ground and not flood the yard.
- If you have fish, use some of this pond water to fill up the holding pool. The fish can be removed from the pond using a net once the water is low enough so you can easily catch them.
- Don't keep the fish in the holding pool for more than several hours. Keep them in a shady spot with a net over the top of the pool.

Don't Overdo the Cleaning

- Rinse the inside of the pond. Remove debris from the rocks and gravel.
- Don't try to scrub all of the algae away. Some algae on the rocks will prove beneficial in developing your ecosystem. For an average size pond (3m x 4m) this should take around 20 minutes.
- Use the gentle stream from a garden hose to rinse the rocks and gravel. Start at the top and work your way down to the bottom. Periodically turn the clean-out pump on to remove the dirty water. You can discontinue the periodic pumping once the water rinsing down to the bottom begins to look clear. Remove the pump and begin filling the pond.

Cleaning the Filters

- Remove any debris from the bottom of the skimmer. This can be done by hand or by using the clean out pump.
- Remove the media nets and filter pads from the BioFalls Filter. Once the filters have been removed rinse them free of accumulated debris.
- The filter media and mats can be put back into place and the waterfall pump can be reattached in the skimmer.

Putting Your Fish Back into their Clean Home

- If you're on city water, it's imperative that you add a de-chlorinator to the water so it is safe for fish.
- Dip a 20 liter bucket, or similar sized container, in the holding tank and fill it with water.
- After you've caught a fish, place it in the bucket and set the buckets in the clean water.
- After about 15 minutes, periodically begin splashing some pond water into the bucket.
- By now, the temperature of the pond and the bucket water should be close to the same. You are ready to put the fish into their spring-cleaned home.



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