

How can I attract wildlife to my pond?

The benefits

Adding a pond to your garden is recommended by many of the wildlife organisations as one of the best ways to attract wildlife to your garden. Garden ponds are also considered to be some of our country's most valuable wildlife habitats, all the more important as ponds in the wild become encroached by building or polluted by run-off from roads.

In most cases, wildlife will turn up at your pond of its own accord. Birds drinking and bathing at the edge. Amphibians spawning. Damselflies and/or dragonflies dancing over the water surface. Pond-skaters and whirly-gig beetles, and a plethora of underwater life.

Siting and Design

Careful pond siting and design will maximise the pool's wildlife potential. There are various approaches, but the ones considered most appropriate from our experience include:

- Siting where the pool will obtain a fair amount of summer sunshine
- Not too much shading from overhanging trees or shrubs; but a little shade from poolside plants
- A moderately deep centre to help stabilise pond temperature and reduce green water algae
- Shelved contours (for planting), and shallows or a beach area to encourage wildlife and ease access
- Plant into baskets/containers to restrict excessive plant growth and limit loose soil
- Provide a link with the rest of the garden e.g. adjacent plant borders and not a complete ring of paving
- Provide nearby perches and shelter (piles of logs or stones) for e.g. birds and amphibians

Stocking

- Take care when adding plants to avoid introducing unwanted weeds. Amphibians generally turn up of their own accord. Don't move spawn from other places as this can sometimes spread disease.
- Aim for a good balance of plants: underwater, marginal, floating
- Avoid invasive plants (exotic or native)
- Avoid adding many fish, if any at all
- Don't introduce large messy fish like koi/carp

Management

The pond may be wild, but it will still benefit from some routine maintenance:

- Avoid feeding too much fish food or using plant fertilizers
- Avoid using stronger pond treatments or pesticides around the pond
- Trim back dead plant growth and net over in the autumn to keep out excess leaves
- Ensure some of the water surface (ideally at least a third) is kept free of plants
- Remove and compost excessive plant growth and prevent surrounding soil from washing into the pool
- Top up with clean rainwater when possible (beneficially low in nutrients)
- If you need to top up with tapwater, use an appropriate water conditioner
- Save as much pond water as possible when the pond finally requires cleaning

Water Garden Solutions has designed wildlife-pools to incorporate the best varieties of water plants, giving a balance between being attractive to wildlife and being attractive to owners. By using native plants where appropriate and avoiding invasive plants, balanced conditions can be obtained that are most beneficial to wildlife.

If you would like a wildlife pond in your garden contact us to discuss our design and installation services.

© 2012