



How to make a mini ornamental pond

Not every garden can afford room for a traditional pond. But most can afford a little space—a wall ledge, in a nook on the patio, or even as a centrepiece on the picnic table, in which to create a container pond. A small water feature will complement your garden by increasing sensory stimulation, broadening the selection of plants grown as well as providing shelter and a 'drop-in drinks service' for wildlife. However, do be aware of safety implications of having an accessible water feature.

Keep it simple and avoid fussy electrics and maintenance. Upcycle a washbasin, source a tin bath, unwanted cooking dish, or an ornamental plant pot and use sealant to fill in the drainage holes.

What you will need:

- Suitable container
- Selection of aquatic (pond) plants
- Aquatic compost (or use subsoil mixed with grit)
- Aquatic planting baskets (or similar)
- Pea gravel/grit
- Ruler (to measure depths)
- Rainwater (previously collected in a butt or pail)



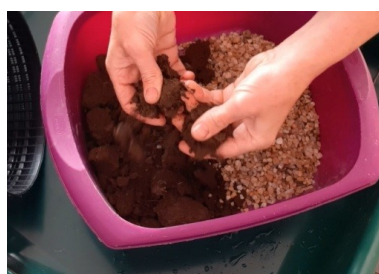
The finished product-to be



Step 1

Step 1 Gather the materials, washing any grit/gravel in rainwater to remove any residue. Pond plants purchased in advance should be stored in a bucket of water.

Step 2 If using subsoil, mix 50:50 with gravel/grit breaking up any clumpy bits. Alternatively, use bagged aquatic compost. Don't be tempted to use general purpose compost as it has far too many nutrients available which will cause problems in the long term.



Step 2

Step 3 Most garden centre pond plants are supplied in small plastic pots. To ensure the plants longevity, it must be planted in an aquatic basket (or upcycle a similar plastic mesh container) which allows a free flow of water to the plants roots at all time. Select a pot 'one size up' to plant into. Hessian squares can also be inserted to prevent excess soil escaping into the water. Place plant into centre of new pot and pack firmly with the aquatic compost or soil/grit mix.



Step 3

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Need help, advice, or further information? visit our website or call 01738 624348

How to make a mini ornamental pond (cont)



Step 4

Step 4 Settle the compost/soil by submerging in water briefly, then add a good layer of grit/gravel to help keep the soil in position when submerged in the actual pond container.

Ensure blocks/bricks/stones/grit/gravel are pre-washed in rainwater to remove any residue and keep your pond crystal clear!



Step 5

Step 5 Place plants in final planting positions. If viewed only from one side, place taller growing plants to the back, or if viewed from all around, place plants appropriately to ensure good viewing.

Plant labels will advise what depth *below* the water's surface plants should be placed at. Use bricks /stones/slate/gravel etc . to adjust planting depths to suit, and also create steps for an escape route for wildlife.

Step 6 Slowly add rainwater to fill the container fully. Any damaged leaves should be removed. Choose hardy pond plants that should survive a cold winter— be aware that the smaller the container, the greater its chance of freezing in winter. If easily moved, small pond containers would benefit from being over-wintered in an outdoor awning or similar.

Clear off obvious dead and dying leaves in late Autumn, and apply a proprietary aquatic plant food in Spring following the packet directions.



Step 6

Plants used in this trough container :

Upright Zebra Rush (*Scirpus lacustris zebrinus*) 10-20cm planting depth

Quirky Corkscrew Rush (*Juncus effusus f. spiralis*) 0-10cm planting depth

Dwarf water lily (*Nymphaea pygmaea helvola*) 10-25cm planting depth



Dwarf water lily buds

Alternatively : A charity shop glass bowl (or a recycled plastic bowl , if more appropriate), planted with a shallow water loving water mint (*Mentha pulegium*) is attractive to wildlife, and delivers a sensory explosion of sight, touch, smell and taste. Ideal for a patio table top Beware: Be sure to keep the glass bowl frost free during winter or it will crack!

Further information on water features, garden ponds, and pond plant selection can be found at: www.puddleplants.co.uk