

Pond Creation



Illustration by: Beverley Coraldean Image by Alan Price

Wild ponds have been disappearing at an alarming rate over the last 100 years. Creating a wildlife pond is one of the most effective things you can do for nature and you can see the results in a matter of weeks. A wildlife pond is also a valuable learning resource as your pupils experience the frogs spawning, birds bathing and dragonflies darting.

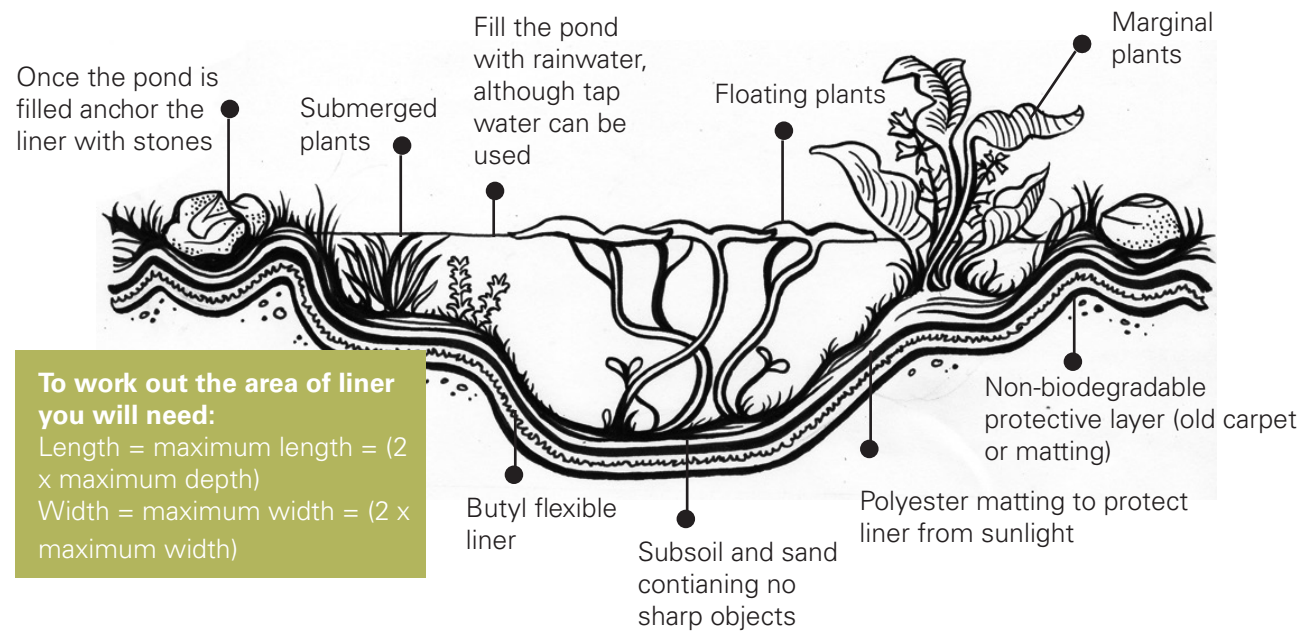
Location

- Avoid shade and overhanging trees. A sunny sheltered spot is best.
- In a low-lying position where rainwater will naturally run into to it.
- Near a water supply so that it can be topped up in dry weather.
- Dig your pond well away from underground pipes and electricity lines.
- Site the pond somewhere where it is easy to fence it off from the pupils' main area of play (it is recommended to surround school ponds with a fence of at least 1.2 metres in height).
- Not in a prestigious position (as they can look a bit scruffy in winter) but also not out of site (where potential vandals can go unnoticed).

Digging your Pond

- You can dig ponds at any time of year. A pond started in spring will develop the fastest.
- Mark out the pond shape, the bigger the better for wildlife.
- Ensure that the pond edge will be the same height all round.
- Aim for shallow edges, with bays, shelves, and ledges to provide a variety of depths. This is essential for animals to get in and out, and also any overly keen pupils to get out easily!
- A school pond should be no deeper than 0.75m deep at its deepest point. It is good for wildlife to have at least a small area in the centre this deep to stop it freezing in the winter.
- A trench should be dug around the edge of the pond so you can bury the edges of the liner.
- Compact soil and remove any large stones.

Creating your Pond



Planting

- Leave your pond at least a week for soil to settle before planting.
- Plant between April and September Stock your pond with native plants (please see table below) from other garden ponds (after clearing) or garden centres.
- You can plant straight into the layer of soil you have provided or put plants on the ledges into perforated pots. Planting in pots controls the growth of vigorous plants.
- Different water plants require different depths of water, so choose a selection of different types. You need three different types of plant in any pool:

Submerged and floating plants to serve as oxygenators - Essential to a healthy pond because they supply the oxygen that pond animals need and use up dissolved nutrients.

Submerged plants with floating leaves - You should have enough to cover about half the surface of the pond, to avoid problems with excessive algal growth.

Marginal plants, in shallow water at the pond edge - They contribute shade and cover for animals and make up much of pond's visual appeal. They are also used by creatures like dragonfly nymphs to crawl up out of the water to pupate.

Common Wildlife-friendly Water Plants Suitable for Small Places

SUBMERGED PLANTS	FLOATING PLANTS	SHALLOW WATER MARGINAL PLANTS
Water starwort <i>Callitriche autumnalis</i>	White water lily <i>Nymphaea alba</i>	Sweet flag <i>Acorus calamus</i>
Hornwort <i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i>	Yellow water lily <i>Nuphar lutea</i>	Flowering rush <i>Butomus umbellatus</i>
Frogbit <i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i>	Water soldier <i>Stratiotes aloides</i>	Bog arun <i>Calla palustris</i>
Water milfoil <i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>	Arrowhead <i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>	Marsh marigold <i>Caltha palustris</i>
Curled pondweed <i>Potamogeton crispis</i>		*Bogbean <i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>
*Water crowfoot <i>Ranunculus aquatilis</i>		*Lesser spearwort <i>Ranunculus flammula</i>
		Brooklime <i>Veronica beccabunga</i>
		Water plantain <i>Alisma plantago</i>
		Yellow flag Iris <i>Iris pseudacorus</i>

*These are vigorous plants, use with care in a small pond

Pond Animals

- Most animals will arrive without your help, especially if there are other ponds nearby.
- Do not add exotic fish to your pond – they will eat all the wildlife!

Fact

- In spring female frogs each lay up to 3,000 eggs!
- Male sticklebacks do a zig-zag dance to attract mates!



Saving **Norfolk's Wildlife** for the Future