

How to build a Minipond

for wildlife and biodiversity

Safety Notes: Always wash your hands before and after working on your pond or in the garden. Wear suitable protective gloves and footwear, and use good posture to protect your back as you work. If there are young children or pets around, ponds are not recommended for safety reasons, but a small bird bath or feeding table might suit instead.

Adding a reliable source of fresh water is one of the most effective ways of supporting wildlife in your garden. A simple pond can offer a rest stop, refreshment or even a home to a host of beautiful creatures from bees and dragonflies to birds and bats.

1. Pick the best spot for your pond

A healthy pond needs a roughly even amount of sunlight and shade. Avoid areas where a lot of leaves might fall into the water as this could clog up your pond.

If you already have a wildlife feature in your garden, like a hedge, logpile, compost heap or long growth grass, the pond will do best next to that.



2. Find a container

There are lots of household objects that can be repurposed to make the perfect pond. Plastic tubs, buckets, bins or basins are great because they're often thick and durable. Local florists, shops and restaurants often have empty containers that would be suitable, and they're often happy to pass them on free of charge.



3. Dig a hole

Taking your time at this stage will pay off. Make sure you have gloves, a spade or fork that suits your size, and keep an eye of your posture to protect your back. You may uncover sharp or rusty glass and metal items that were discarded over the years. Only handle these with reinforced safety gloves or ideally pick them up with hand tools and dispose of them safely.





4. Check the levels

Ideally the pond should be perfectly level so that the water reaches the top of the container all the way round. The top of the container should also sit at, or just below the surface of the soil. If you have a spirit level, check the level from front to back and side to side. If you have a smartphone, there are spirit level apps that work well enough too.



5. Line the base

Add a layer of clean sand or gravel at the bottom of the pond to create a more natural surface. This also helps by creating room for beneficial microorganisms to thrive. Children's play sand is ideal if you have some. If you happen to find a few stones when digging your pond, give them a quick wash and add them to the base to add a variety of spaces for microorganisms.



6. Add perches and a ramp

Creatures visit ponds in a few different ways so you'll need to provide a clear route in and out to keep them safe. A few stones sticking out of the water will allow bees to stop and have a drink without falling in. A simple ramp made from a small log or brick, will provide an escape route for any small animals like hedgehogs or field mice to find their way out.



7. Fill with rainwater

Rainwater is best for ponds as tap water uses chemical treatments that aren't great for wildlife. You can collect rainwater in a rainbarrel or water butt, or just by leaving out a few buckets and pots in the garden. If you only have tap water, just fill a bucket and leave it outside for a day or so, to allow most of the chemicals to evaporate.



8. Add oxygenating plants

Wildlife ponds don't use pumps or filters as these would harm the creatures living in the water. All you need is a native oxygenating plant such as Hornwort to keep the water fresh. Then you can line the edges with some pebbles, sods of grass or other greenery.