

Potted ponds

Get all the benefits of a pond, with minimal fuss and effort. Simply follow **Helen Riches'** guide to creating one in a pot.

There's nothing like having your own pond: water reflecting the sky, the peace and tranquillity of water lilies, and the untold benefits to wildlife. They bring so much to a garden. And it doesn't have to be a huge project: a pond in a container provides all of these things, and can be up and running in an afternoon, with no need to hire earth movers or wrestle with yards of costly butyl liner.

When choosing aquatic plants for your mini pond, check labels for key information on the water depth needed, the plant vigour (not too invasive) and the best aspect for plant health, which is usually sunny. Include oxygenating plants to help keep the water clear. We've done all your homework for you with these three gorgeous watery projects. Over to you!

Keep it simple

This minimalist pond really makes a style statement, yet keeps things simple. It also highlights the beautiful foliage many aquatic plants have to offer. This display has fun with designer verticals, using more than one of each plant

for optimum impact.

This purpose-made container pond comes with a grid, making it easy to position the plants. (more of this on p72). Alternatively, use upturned pots on the base to achieve the correct depth.



Cut down the umbrella-like bracts of *Cyperus involucratus* in spring

Top tips

PICK OFF spent foliage regularly to prevent the water getting clogged with rotting plant matter. In spring, remove surplus roots and runners to keep the plants contained.

REMOVE the seedheads from juncus to stop it self-seeding. *Cyperus involucratus* is more tender, so take cuttings or bring the plant indoors over winter.



PICK OFF



DEADHEAD



Cyperus involucratus x 3

Juncus ensifolius x 3

Equisetum scirpoides x 3

Myriophyllum spicatum (submerged oxygenator) x 3

60cm container pond (watersidenursery.co.uk) £200

Wildlife winner

Partially dig a metal container, such as an old tin bath (without holes) into a sunny bed so that the water is accessible to amphibians and hedgehogs. Or make a ramp from old bricks to smooth their route. These lush aquatic plants provide excellent wildlife cover, with their flowers attracting pollinating insects throughout the summer. It's good to have low plants surrounding the pond without it becoming overshadowed.

Anemopsis californica X 1

Mentha cervina X 1

Mentha cervina alba X 1

Pontederia cordata X 1

Veronica beccabunga X 1

Cast iron bowl
(a lucky junk shop find) £20

Myriophyllum spicatum
(submerged oxygenator) x 1

Top tips

AVOID being too tidy to encourage nature to invade your pond. Plant the veronica at the edges so it will creep over the edge.

CUT OUT damaged leaves on a weekly basis. *Anemopsis californica* spreads by runners, so keep it in check and pot up spare plants that have rooted.

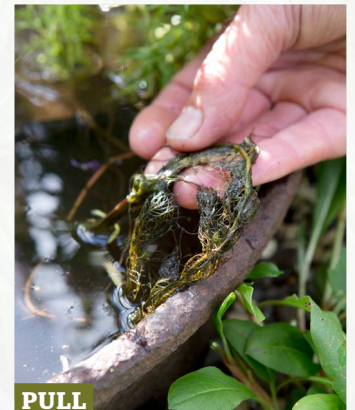
PULL dying foliage and blanket weed out by hand. Help keep the water fresh with extract of barley straw.



AVOID



CUT OUT



PULL

Lily pond

Few plants compete with the elegant glossy pads and charming cupped flowers of water lilies. So why not showcase them in a dedicated lily pot – choose smaller varieties for best results. *Nymphaea* 'Marliacea Albida' requires at least 30cm of water above the top of its aquatic basket, so a deep container is essential. *N.* 'Pygmaea Helvola' needs less depth (10-20cm), so just pop a brick or two under its pot to elevate it to the right height.

Nymphaea 'Marliacea Albida' x 1

Myriophyllum spicatum (submerged oxygenator) x 1

Nymphaea 'Pygmaea Helvola' x 1

Imitation terracotta bowl (capital-garden.com) £326

Top tips

MAINTAIN water levels, especially in warm weather. Avoid placing water lilies near a splashing fountain or water feature, or they will rot.

FLOAT two weighted bundles of oxygenating *Myriophyllum spicatum* to every square metre of water.

PRUNE dead flowers and foliage from the base frequently to prevent water pollution.



MAINTAIN



FLOAT



PRUNE

Be water wise

Your container pond should be filled with collected rainwater. If only tap water is available, leave it to settle for a few days to dissipate its chlorine content, or add a proprietary eco-friendly dechlorinator, available online or from a specialist nursery. Do the same thing every time you top up.

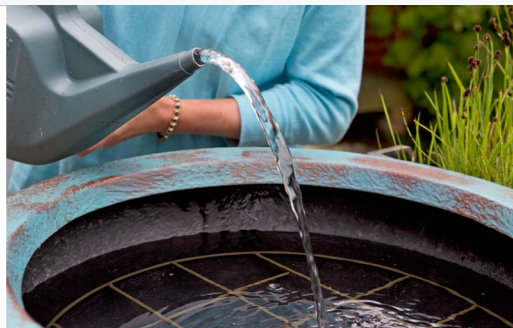


Step by step

How to create your pond



1 PLACE the grid in the container. We used marginal plants needing only about 5cm of water above the basket. The equisetum is fine with less.



2 FILL the container with water (see 'Be water wise' above). Add a weighted bundle of *Myriophyllum spicatum* to oxygenate the water.



3 LINE UP the plants in rows, with tall ones at the back. They can be popped straight into the container in their aquatic baskets.



4 POSITION in a sheltered place, in full sun. Damselflies and dragonflies find these long stems a useful perch to rest.

Where to buy pond plants and equipment

- **Beaver Plants Ltd**
01342 833144,
beaverplantsgrowers.co.uk
- **Paul Bromfield** 01462 457
399, bromfieldaquatics.co.uk
- **Lilies Water Gardens**
01306 631064,
lilieswatergardens.co.uk
- **The Water Margins**
01834 831585,
thewatermargins.co.uk
- **Waterside Nursery**
07931 557082,
watersidenursery.co.uk

FIND MORE ADVICE

on making your own mini pond at bit.ly/pot-pond

SPECIAL THANKS TO WATERSIDE NURSERY