

Make a Mini Garden Pond

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When I moved in to my house a few years ago there was a small pond in the garden where the previous owners has kept some fish. It had been made from a large plastic garden pot filled with stones.



I hadn't bothered to do anything with it my plan was to eventually dig it out. Last year my neighbours filled in their pond.

A couple of weeks ago I heard frogs and just though they were in my neighbours garden. However I found frog spawn in our pond.



Now my son goes every day to check the progress of the frog spawn and waiting for the day they turn in to tadpoles.

You can create a small pond out of something like an old washing up bowl.

Once created it won't take very long for wildlife to start moving in.

You will need

- A large container that will hold water such as an old washing up bowl or a stacker box.
- Some gravel and rocks
- Some small pond plants



1. **Decide where to put your pond.**

Make sure it is in a safe place away from small children.

Ideally you'll put it somewhere that gets a good amount of light, make sure there is some shade. You don't want the water to get too hot.

2. **Don't fill it with water just yet. It will be heavy to move and you could end up very wet!**

3. When you have decided where to put your pond it is time to start digging a hole. Make sure that the hole is big enough so that the container you are using is level. You can edge to container with stones so that it looks a little more natural

4. **Prepare your pond.** Put a layer of clean gravel in the bottom if you wish. Don't use soil – it is too full of nutrients and it will prompt blooms of unsightly algae to form.

5. **Make sure that wildlife can get in and out**, by using bricks, rocks or logs to create a ramp in and out of the pond. It is vital that the pond is not a trap for creatures such as mice or hedgehogs if they fall in by accident.
6. **At last, you can fill your pond!** Whenever possible, use rainwater. Tapwater contains too many chemicals to be good for a pond.
7. **Plant up your pond.** It is best to put in plants in special aquatic plant pots (which have mesh sides). Use a very low nutrient soil (you can buy special soil for ponds), mixed with grit.

Submerged pondweed is vital to help the pond stay clear, Always use native plants in ponds – rigid hornwort and whorled water-milfoil are recommended. You can buy these from garden centres or specialist pond suppliers.

Include native marginal plants around the edge, poking clear of the surface to give perches and cover to wildlife. Just be very careful to only use plants that won't grow too large for such a small space. Two or three plants is the maximum for a pond this size. Try plants such as water forget-me-not, lesser spearwort and marsh marigold.

8. **Aftercare.** For the first few months, don't worry if you get algae or blanket weed (which is like strings of green gloop), get children to remove it by winding it around a stick – it's fun!
9. As your mini-pond matures, all the pond creatures you've attracted will help keep the water clear. You may need to top the pond up in hot weather – try to use rainwater from a water butt.

10. **And now see what arrives!**

Don't be tempted to bring in buckets of pond life from elsewhere.

Pond creatures are great at finding ponds themselves.

Toads tend to like larger ponds, but there is every chance a frog or newt will find your mini-pond, especially if you provide corridors of cover next to a pond.