# Spring & Summer Pond Care

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

**Spring Tips**

It's time to wake your pond from its winter nap. First, clear out any debris that is in or around your pond. When water temperatures are between 40° and 55°F, clean your pond filter and pump thoroughly.

Spring is a good time to do a partial water change, but remember to add dechlorinator dechlorinator if your water source contains chlorine. As ponds awaken, a "spring green" may appear in the water until plants and bacteria get established. This is a normal algae bloom and will clear up on its own once plants have grown and the filter has recovered to take care of excess nutrients.

Plants should cover a large percentage of your pond's surface area to help keep water cooler on hot days and reduce the amount of algae growth. Order and plant either lilies or water hyacinths if you need more shade in your pond. (Lilies prefer calm water, whereas hyacinths can handle some moving water.)

Do not start feeding your pond fish until the pond water is at least 50°F. Then feed a wheat germ-based food until water reaches the 70s.

**Maintaining your Pond**

Once the "spring cleaning" on your pond is completed, maintenance throughout the summer is easy. Here's all your pond should need:

**Daily:** Feed & observe fish. Check water flow.

Fish should be observed on a daily basis. It takes just a few minutes a day and can be a wonderful stress reliever.

Fish can be fed every day, but goldfish can get by for a week by feeding on algae, mosquitoes and other organisms in the water. Signs of health problems would be: swimming in quick bursts, often running into objects; little or no movement when other fish are active, holding fins against body; whitish or red areas on your fish. If any of these symptoms are noticed, your intervention may be necessary. These could also be signs of declining water quality, so watertests would be in order.

Filters should be checked any time flow decreases. They should be cleaned monthly to prevent build up.

If water flow has changed dramatically, the filter and pump should be examined immediately. If shut off for 6 hours or more, the filter needs recleaning.

**Weekly:** Trim and test.

Trim plant stems close to the soil or crown as they die back. Remove trimmings, as they will decay and can clog pumps and filters. Weekly testing for nitrites and pH is recommended since early detection and action can help you avoid problems.

**Monthly:** Clean filters and pumps; add mosquito control and plant fertilizers.

Monthly filter cleaning involves rinsing out the pump and mechanical filtration (sponges or pads) in the filter. If biological filtration needs cleaning, make sure the rinse water does not contain chlorine, and the media is not left out to dry. A filter that needs cleaning more often is either a symptom of a dirty pond or too small of a filter.

Plants become more vibrant with fertilizer, but blooming ones are more prolific if they get fed monthly. Usually 3 plant food tablets per lily or lotus is recommended, less for bog plants. Mosquito control, such as Mosquito Dunks, is recommended if the surface is stagnant in some areas of your pond.

**Summer Tips**

As the temperature of your pond water increases, the ability of the water to 'hold' dissolved oxygen decreases. Any time the water temperature is above 85°F, you'll want to feed fish sparingly.

When temperatures get high, dissolved oxygen levels decrease, making it hard for inhabitants to

To help keep your pond cool and well oxygenated, consider adding a waterfall, fountain, or aerator. Higher oxygen levels also help control algae. Adding lilies, parrots feather, water lettuce, and water hyacinths will also help provide shade to



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keep water cooler.

When planning to go away for vacation, it's wise to clean all filters and find someone willing to check in on your pond every 2-3 days. You can install automatic feeders to provide your fish with food, but they won't help if the pump shuts off.

A skimmer system sits at the top of the water and captures floating debris before it can get to your other filtration devices. This means less bio-load and more efficiency and less cost! - for all your filtration.

## How to Control Mosquitoes

Don't let mosquitoes prevent you from enjoying your backyard and pond. Here are a few solutions we recommend to control mosquitoes (and reduce the chance of you or your pets contracting mosquito-transmitted diseases):

- Decrease the amount of standing water by including a waterfall or a fountain in your pond.
- Use pond insecticides such as Mosquito Dunks or Microbe-Lift Liquid Mosquito Control.
- Purchase a few bat houses - a single bat can eat as many as 1,000 mosquitoes in a single night and they're fun to watch dart around.

breathe. Waterfalls, fountains, and aerators help cool ponds and raise oxygen levels. Floating water plants add shade and help keep pond water cool. Lilies prefer still water and Hyacinths can handle moving water.



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