

# Planning a Pond - Your first steps

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

Water gardening in your own backyard can be a highly rewarding pastime. Not only can you see the fruits of your labor each day, but building the tranquility and beauty that a natural pond affords can be a relatively simple task.

Well-thought-out planning that keeps nature's needs in mind makes building a pond enjoyable and satisfying. A pond or water garden is a wonderful addition to your landscaping, letting you create your own personal paradise. Remember that the bigger a pond, the easier to maintain, so plan the largest pond your budget and the appearance of your landscaping allows.

## Location, location, location.

These questions may help you narrow down the best location for your pond.

*What area of your yard can you see from your favorite outside relaxation site and from the windows in your home?*

Outline the maximum area in that site with a water hose. This way, if you need to switch locations, it's easy to move the hose.

*Where are trees located near this area?*

Placing your water garden next to, or under a tree, may make installation and maintenance difficult, so plan away from tree canopies.

*Are there any pine trees nearby?*

Pine needles can poison a water garden. Make sure your pond won't collect falling needles.

*Is the area prone to receiving water runoff or retaining water?*

If you believe runoff may be a problem, design the pond so that it features raised areas, landscaping, or drainage. And avoid areas that retain water.



*Is your pond safe from predators and for the neighborhood?*

Children are naturally inquisitive about a pond and predators may be attracted to the area. A fence keeps curious children and larger predators away.

*How many hours of direct sun will your water garden receive?*

Spend a day recording how many hours of sun each section of your water garden receives. This determines what type of pond you'll install.

*How will you provide electricity to the pond?*

You should have an outlet within ten feet of the pond, since extension cords can be dangerous. Also, check with local zoning authorities for outdoor electrical requirements.

*What type of water features do you want?*

Do you want a koi pond or water garden? [Read our other article](#) to find out the differences between the two types.

## Style

Find other homes in your area with ponds to help you decide and even to spark some creative ideas. Reading and research are also valuable. Ponds can be formal or be incredibly informal. You can also add a babbling brook, waterfall, or fountain to provide a soothing sound. Beautiful lighting can make the pond a favorite evening attraction.

[Helen Nash's Water Features for Every Garden](#) has great ideas, beautiful photography, and prerequisites for 18 different types of designs.

The design of a water garden can greatly affect costs and the success of your project. You need to consider:

- Total depth
- Shelf depth for desired plants
- Location of filtration, fountain, or waterfall

Having the end result in mind helps greatly in your pond's success. Check out the [lighting](#) and [decorative](#) options for further ideas.