

# Tips For Small Scale Success

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Homeowners new to pond-keeping may be inclined to start with a small fish pond. However, small fish ponds, less than 1,000 gallons, can present a greater challenge. For small fish pond success, pay special attention to water quality, stocking level, and oxygen levels.

## Monitor and maintain water quality

A smaller fish pond may seem easier to maintain. After all, less water means less work, right? Contrary to this logic, a small fish pond may involve more maintenance if important water parameters are not monitored carefully and kept within acceptable levels. Due to their smaller water volume, small fish ponds are more susceptible to the potentially harmful effects of poor water quality. A large volume of water dilutes toxins and the effects of such harmful chemicals as ammonia and nitrite.

However, when water-quality issues occur in small ponds, harmful chemicals can quickly rise to toxic levels, placing great stress on pond fish and the entire pond ecosystem. A reliable [master pond test kit](#) and scheduled routine maintenance is essential for all ponds, especially smaller ponds. Also, be sure to routinely monitor pond water temperature. A smaller pond is subject to greater change in temperature since it is easier to heat or cool a smaller volume of water. Less water means less stable temperatures and that means more stress to pond fish. A [floating pond thermometer](#) is an inexpensive tool that provides vital information regarding your pond environment.

## Maintain a low stocking level

Koi are considered the quintessential pond fish. However, they may not be the ideal choice for small fish ponds. Koi require a pond with at least 1,000 gallons of water, and under ideal conditions, these beautiful fish can grow to a length of 36 inches! When choosing fish for your pond, always consider the adult or maximum size of the species you are interested in. If you have a small pond, resist the purchase of young, juvenile koi or comets. Though cute and seemingly manageable, comets can grow over 12 inches in length and can quickly crowd a small pond. Instead, consider [Ornamental or Fancy Goldfish](#). They are excellent alternatives to koi and are better suited for smaller fish ponds. Keep in mind that most well-maintained ponds will support roughly 1 inch of adult fish per ten gallons of water.

## Oxygenate small ponds

Similar to water quality, pond oxygen level is influenced by water volume - more precisely, the water surface where gas exchange occurs. A pond with a small water surface area can experience poor gas exchange. Without proper gas exchange to replenish oxygen, a series of negative events can occur including fish stress and compromised biological filtration. Install an [aeration device](#) or a [water fountain kit](#) to enhance gas exchange in your small pond. Also, use a [test kit](#) to accurately measure oxygen levels. Test regularly, especially during periods of warm weather, to make sure your small fish pond has enough oxygen for healthy fish.

## Recommended Products

### [LiveAquaria.com](#)

Find a wide selection of Fancy Goldfish and other pond fish to add color and life to your pond

### [Drs. Foster & Smith Professional Aeration Pumps](#)

High-efficiency, high-volume air pump invigorates oxygen-poor pond water with fresh air.

### [PondCare Pond Master Liquid Test Kit](#)

Budget-friendly test kit includes easy-to-use tests for pH, nitrite, ammonia, and phosphate.

### [Pond Thermometer](#)

Economical pond thermometer essential for monitoring pond water temperature.