

## Fall Pond Fish Care

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

**Proper pond care in autumn helps prepare and condition your pond for the coming winter. Make over-wintering ornamental fish ponds a worry-free process with the following guide.**

### Maintain a healthy pond environment

A substantial water change, up to 50%, removes contaminants and helps maintain improved water conditions throughout the winter. This seasonal water change is best done before water temperatures drop below 60°F. This is also a great time to remove organic materials accumulated on the bottom of your pond.

### Change fish diet and feeding schedule

As water temperatures dip into the 60°F range, cut back on feedings and mix [staple diet](#) with a [wheat germ diet](#). Once water temperatures reach around 50°F, only offer wheat germ diet to your fish. Stop feeding when water temperature is at 40°F and do not feed again until water temperatures are consistently over 50°F in the spring.

### Keep falling leaves out of your pond

Secure a [pond net](#) over your pond. When leaves begin to pile up on the net, disconnect one side, remove debris, and repeat the process until all of the leaves have dropped from the trees. Remove any remaining leaves from your pond with a [pond vacuum](#), [net](#), or rake.

### Plant maintenance

Remove or bring [tropical plants](#) indoors. Once they are no longer green, trim [hardy water lilies](#) down to about an inch or two above the crown and move them to a deeper part of the pond. Trim [marginal or bog plants](#) or leave some for winter interest.

### Equipment check

Thoroughly clean your [pond filters](#) during fall. When water temperature drops below 40°F, shut down the [water pump](#) and remove the [filter media](#) to prevent damage due to freezing. Drain and store pump and filter media per manufacturer's recommendation.

### Winter preparations

It is crucial to provide proper gas exchange throughout the winter. If extended periods of freezing temperatures are common in your area, install a [de-icer](#) or an [aerator](#). These devices maintain an opening and prevent ice from forming completely over the pond surface. If you have an [aeration kit](#), place it near the surface to prevent colder water/air from mixing with warmer water near the bottom of the pond.

## WATER TEMPERATURE GUIDE FOR WINTERIZING YOUR POND

72°F

50% water change

Divide and [repot plants](#)

60°F

Mix [staple diet](#) and [wheat germ](#)

Bring in or dispose [tropical plants](#)

Install [pond net](#) when leaves begin to fall

50°F

Change food to [wheat germ](#)

45°F

[Trim](#) hardy water lilies and move to deeper water

40°F

Stop feeding fish

Below 40°F

Move or remove [pump](#)

Install [De-Icer](#)

Install a <a href="#">pond net</a> when leaves turn color.	Cut back on feedings and switch to a <a href="#">wheat germ diet</a> .	Remove leaves from your pond with a <a href="#">pond vacuum</a> .	Don't wait until winter to invest in a <a href="#">de-icer</a> .
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