

Plants for your Pond...

By Andy McConnachie from Aqua Landscape Design

POND CARE



Garden ponds are in effect, manmade micro environments, trying to recreate nature

Why Introduce Plants to Your Pond? Apart from the obvious aesthetical benefits, plants are an integral part of the waters ecosystem, whether it's in natural lakes, ponds, streams, rivers or canals the flora and fauna develop in balance with each other and to the volume of water. One of the most important roles that plants play are their ability in absorbing nitrates; nitrates are the bi-product of waste that can be caused by fish, amphibians and invertebrates, these all excrete waste as ammonia which when broken down by bacteria will turn into nitrite and then nitrate, the plants then consume the nitrates for growth. So in simple terms the fauna feed the flora and the flora clean the water and create food.

Plants also produce beneficial oxygen for fish, however if you have a fairly large fish stock in your pond, then oxygenating weed can have a detrimental effect on livestock; when plants photosynthesise, they release oxygen throughout the day whilst absorbing carbon dioxide, but at night this works in the opposite way; they strip the oxygen from the water and release carbon dioxide leaving fish starved from oxygen and in the summertime they can often die from oxygen starvation. It is important to have the correct balance.

Garden ponds are in effect, manmade micro environments, trying to recreate nature, similar to an aquarium. However, fish are often in far greater numbers than an environment of that size would naturally support so getting the balance can be a difficult task. To make it a little easier and without going into filtration, it is a good idea to have a variety of plants from oxygenating weeds to lilies – a goal might be to achieve a 60% plant coverage over your pond and don't forget that plants will naturally grow and usually quite quickly once the spring is here. I would always recommend introducing some oxygenating weed, such as Elodea or water mint, for two reasons; they provide shade and protection for fish and are excellent in absorbing nitrates. This is because their roots/ runners will grow in amongst the water so effectively they absorb the waste directly from the surrounding water. Marginal planting will create shade in the shallower areas of the pond and give protection to frogs, newts and tadpoles and deeper water plants such as lilies and water hawthorn will give shade from the suns rays, preventing algae. A variety of

floating pond plants such as Water Lettuce, Soldier, Hyacinth and Chestnut are excellent in giving shade and will all assist in helping to combat algae.

Watercress...

Despite most recommendations in growing watercress in running water, you can grow it in your pond. Watercress is not a true aquatic plant; although its roots grow in to the water, the actual plant will grow in soil above the water's edge. Most mature plants will grow runners directly from the main plant and start to grow new ones. It is important not to introduce watercress to stagnant ponds as they won't tolerate dirty water, a new pond or one that has just been cleaned out will happily allow watercress to grow. The best way is to grow it in amongst your waterfall or around the water's edge. Try buying a bunch from a supermarket and putting it in a bucket of water, remember to change the water once a week so it doesn't go stagnant and put it in a good sunny aspect. 🌿

AQUA
LANDSCAPE DESIGN LTD
landscaping with water

Aquatic Shop
Open 9am-6pm Everyday

Summer Plant Offers
Aqua Landscape Design stock a large selection of Aquatic Plants, from lilies to Oxygenators, marginals to floating plants & Native Species. Visit our Aquatic shop for Exclusive offers throughout June

Offering a Full Landscaping Service Specialising in Ponds & Water Gardening.
Bespoke Design, Construction & Renovation.
Contact us to arrange a free Estimate.
Aqua Landscape Design Ltd, Aquatic Shop, Castle Gardens, Dorset
(t) 01935 816 770 (e) info@aqualandscape.co.uk