

4" pvc pipe in the bottom of the pond. Anything that gives the fish cover will help them especially in the spring when the water lilies are still small. Be creative, your fish will love you for it.

7. I'm having some trees sprayed near my pond. Should I protect the pond?

Yes. Make sure the pond is covered before any spraying takes place.

8. My pond is pea green. What should I do?

Nothing. This is a temporary situation caused by an algae bloom. Actions you can take to prevent green water in the future are: add more plants for surface coverage and oxygenation; keep fertilizers out of the pond; feed fish less or not at all; don't empty and refill the pond more than once a year; keep the fish population down; protect pond from lawn runoff. All of these suggestions will help with algae, but in the end it is good to remember Algae is a natural and beneficial part of the ecosystem and a healthy pond has some algae.

9. I've got a lot of string algae. Is it bad for the fish?

No. They like to eat it. If you have an excess amount, a round toilet brush can be used to remove it with ease. To minimize growth of string algae see #8.



10. My pond has iced over. Is this bad for the fish & plants?

Yes and no. It is best to keep some open water in the pond in winter if you have fish. Open water allows the escape of toxic gases given off by decaying material which would be harmful to fish. If you don't have any fish, then it's not really a problem to allow the pond to freeze. If the pond has already frozen and you're worried about your fish, you can pour hot water on the ice to open a hole. Do not pound on the ice to break it up. To keep open water you can run an aerator, stock tank heater or fountain.

11. If I top off my pond do I have to add dechlor?

No. Small amounts of water added to the pond will not create a chlorine problem.

12. I've got a lot of sludge in the bottom of my pond but the water is clear. Should I clean it?

It depends. If the water quality is good and the sludge/mud is not fueling algae then leave it alone. The sludge can provide a place for various pond critters to live and really isn't a problem.

Information compiled by Colorado Water Garden Society and APR Landscape Co.

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Solving Common Pond Problems



1. My pond is losing a lot of water, what should I do?

Many people jump to the conclusion that they have a hole in the bottom of the pond if the water level goes down rapidly. Actually, 99% of the time the leak is NOT in the pond, it's in the moving water, i.e. waterfall, external filter, stream, etc.

First, **TURN OFF ALL PUMPS, INCLUDING FILTERS.** Refill the pond and wait 24 hours. (If you're worried about aeration see #3) It's important to prove to yourself that the leak is not in the pond. IF there is a hole in the pond the water level will go down to where the hole is and stop.

If the pond is built with EPDM it can be patched with stick-on patching material. If it is built with PVC then it requires a solvent and patching material. Concrete ponds are a different matter and require an expert repair although they can be diagnosed in the same way.

Once you feel confident the pond is holding water, you can turn on one pump and let it run for a few hours while you keep an eye on it. If the water level continues to go down, check around the waterfall/stream and pipes for a visible leak. Check for damp soil in these areas.

It's helpful to turn off any sprinkler zones that may flow into the pond. You don't want to confuse the issue. Often, after winter is over pond owners find the soil around their stream or waterfall has settled and the liner has slumped enough to allow water to escape. These usually start small and as the water undermines the soil they get bigger and more noticeable.

To fix a leak like this, just prop up the liner and backfill with soil. Running water is always the biggest suspect when the pond level goes down. Filters sometimes overflow or leak around piping, so be sure to check the filter.

2. My Pond has a strange white or oily substance on the surface

If it has rainbow colors in direct sunlight, it is likely an oil slick produced possibly from a seal that has broken in the pump. This oil is vegetable oil and is NOT

harmful to fish and plants but is unsightly; it will break down eventually on its own. Turn off the pump and remove from the pond. If surface is heavily or completely coated, remove with shop or absorbent paper towels. Replace pump.

If there is just a sparse slick on the surface, it could be from the oils of birds bathing in your pond and is not a concern.

Run your fingers across the surface, then rub them together; if it is gritty it may be pollen from a near-by tree. Pine trees will drop yellow pollen; it's not harmful.

3. My fish are gasping at the surface, what's wrong?

If you observe fish at the surface of your pond gasping (looks similar to begging for food) and/or they are

near a waterfall or fountain, the most likely answer is oxygen depletion. Immediate action needs to be taken.

Add aeration with the use of an additional air pump and air stone. Air pumps are available at pet stores and are inexpensive, you can use a regular aquarium air pump, but you will need to protect it by putting it under a Tupperware container. It's easy to set up an air pump and they are useful year round for adding oxygen to the pond; they will also keep open water in the winter.

If this is occurring in the early morning, remove excess submerged oxygenating plants. IF plant surface coverage is more than 70% remove approximately 20% so gas exchange is improved.

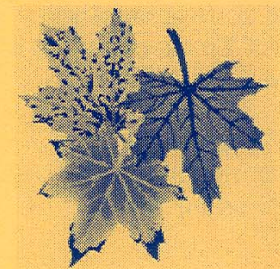


4. Two to three fish are chasing one fish all around the pond, is there a problem?

Not generally, they are just actively involved in spawning or natural reproductive activity. In the early morning females with eggs (swollen abdomen) are pursued relentlessly by males until they drop the eggs so he (or they) can fertilize them. She is not making a "get away," but rather trying to find the best place for protection and growth of her offspring. This activity usually occurs when water temperatures are between 50 - 70°F. A lot of splashing and jumping often accompanies this activity; sometimes a fish may even flip out of the pond.

5. My pond has a lot of decayed leaves and has turned dark brown and/or there is foam on the surface, should I do something about it?

Yes. Decaying leaves give off toxic gases that can be harmful to fish and they also rob the water of oxygen. The best thing is to keep the leaves out of the pond in the first place, but if they're in there and the water has turned dark, it's important to take care of it right away. Get as many of the leaves out as you can. Drain the pond half-way and refill. Add aeration, see #3 above.



6. I'm having trouble with raccoons, herons, etc. eating my fish. What can I do?

Predators are a problem. To provide fish with protection create fish houses. This can be done using flagstone spanning 2 lily pots or putting weighted