

SIMPLE WATER GARDENING

Have you ever gone on a cruise and wondered why you chose this particular venue over all others? You could have gone on a train ride to the mountains or a plane to a safari in Africa. The attraction of water is the calming effect it has on practically everyone. I would venture to say that anyone who has a water feature, even a small one, at their home will find it the gathering spot for family and friends.

As a child I was drawn to a small goldfish pond and fountain in the center of the town park. At home, I maintained an aquarium. Water was peaceful. Fish were not necessarily so. Water gardens come in as many shapes, sizes and descriptions as the people who own them. Did you ever sit quietly watching birds in your bird bath? It naturally follows that if a birdbath is soothing and enjoyable, a pond would be nice.

So, I found a small 4' x 6' x 12" pre-formed pond and dug the hole. Once leveled, I ran an extension cord to the in-pond filter with a wonderful fountain in the center. Now I can listen to the birds serenading to the sounds of bubbling water. Then I found a frog spitter at the local nursery, which sat prominently on the edge of the little pond, sending a projectory of water across the pond. The hardest part of installation was leveling the pond in the hole with the use of a floating level.

Now, the plants for the pond were next. I found the miniature typhus (cattail) for inside the pond and three small varieties of



water lily. Thus, I had a very natural-looking garden already. But my dream was to have a lotus, so I returned to the nursery. The expert told me I needed at least 2" of water to grow a lotus, so I had to forget about the lotus—for the time being anyway. My pond was not large enough for lotus. Someday I will have a lotus garden pond, but not today. For a simple water garden, it is important to keep the plants in scale. Now, my pond had sound, visual and vertical appeal.

What would look nice around the edge of the pond? I collected my nicest (and largest) rocks from around the yard and laid them carefully along the edge so they would look like they belonged there, rather than man-made and hid the edges from view. We needed some color. My favorite garden colors were



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pastels, with blue in the forefront. I selected low, creeping plants with colored foliage, small hostas, and blue cornflower. Cotoneaster comes in an array of sizes and shapes, so I picked one of these and a small rhododendron variety. After this I chose a mugho pine for year-round interest. As a final touch, I found a second-hand concrete statue to grace my garden and slate pavers leading to the pond.

For a simple water garden, the only fish needed would be the guppy-like mosquito fish. No koi or goldfish in this pond. I want less work and more enjoyment. How about you? This water garden has turned my yard into a very inviting place for visitors and a place of replenishment for me. 🍃



By Carolyn Weise, Ecological Laboratories, Inc.
Special thanks to Ecological Laboratories for this great story and photos.
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