

**Fall Checklist**

Regular maintenance of a pond is extremely important to the health of the fish and plants. It also cuts down on how much work is required when it comes time to do a full cleanout. We have two checklists that go over what is recommended to set up your water garden in the spring and to shut it down in the fall. As the Fall/Winter season is fast approaching, it is time to take steps to prepare your water garden to ensure the health of your fish and plants for next spring.

**Fish Care** When the pond water temperature falls below 60 degrees, switch to wheatgerm cool-weather food (less nutritious but easier to digest). When the pond water temperature falls below 45 degrees, discontinue feeding your fish until spring. Inspect your fish for parasites or any other signs of disease. If you suspect a problem either from appearances or behavior of the fish, please call us for a recommended treatment.When water temperatures reach 50 degrees, it is time to do the following:Remove all debris from your pond with a net and vacuum.Use a net to clean out all the large debris. Pump as much sludge as possible from the bottom using a pond vacuum, wet/dry or shop vac. Perform a 30% water change. Always add chlorine/chloramine remover to new water to prevent the death of your fish. Remove your pump, filter, and UV clarifier (always). Clean and store indoors for the winter, unless deciding to continue to run your pump, filter, or waterfalls.

**Plant Maintenance** Hardy Plants**--**All hardy plants can be treated the same. Trim the growth to 2 inches above the crown and submerge to the deepest part of the pond.

Floating Plants--Remove and discard all floating plants such as duckweed, water hyacinths, water lettuce, parrot feather, floating heart, and frog bit from your pond. These plants require too much effort to keep alive thru the winter.

Tropical Bog Plants—These marginals can be treated as house plants but must be brought in before the evening temperature reaches 50 degrees. Place them in a window that gets good sunlight. Keep the soil very moist and fertilize monthly with lily tabs.

Tropical Lilies--There are 2 methods of storing a tropical lily: 1) Indoor pond: Place the pot in a bucket or tub of clean pond water under a grow light. Keep the plants above 60 degrees replacing the water every so often. The water will stay cleaner with a small pump and filter. 2) Dormancy: For the plant to survive all winter dormant it will have to have grown a tuber. The tuber is where the plant stores energy. Stop fertilizing the plants in late summer. The lack of nutrients should induce tuber growth. Wait until the weather has begun to turn cold. Usually by early November the leaves of the lilies will be turning yellow but not yet brown. Remove the root mass from the pot, rinse with pond water, and cut off all dead growth. If there is no tuber, let the plant float freely (not in a pot) for a few weeks. Store the plant mass in damp peat moss or sand in a sealed container near 60 degrees for the winter. Re-pot the plant in mid to late May. It's best to start the plant shallow until the plant is re-established. We like to have the top of the pot about 6 to 8 inches below the surface.

**Add a Barley Bale** Barley Bales are an effective way to control string-algae in the spring, especially if you had problems with string or hair algae this year.

**Add Aqua-Shade Pond Dye** Some people get a lot of string algae growth in the winter. The easiest way to prevent algae growth in the winter is to use the blue or black dye. This will make the pond so dark that you cannot see down into the water, but it will keep the algae from growing without harming plants or fish. It is also an effective predator deterrent; if you can't see your fish neither can the raccoons.

**Add Algaecides** The other method of preventing winter algae is to use algaecides. These are harder on plants and fish, but they will leave the water clear. If you choose to use algaecides, it is best to keep the water moving.

**De-Icers** Add a floating de-icer to the pond. It is important to keep a hole in the ice to allow oxygen to contact the water and perhaps, more importantly, for gases caused by rotting matter to escape.

**Air Pumps** If you are concerned that the de-icer may not be enough for the number of fish you have, consider adding an air pump to increase gas exchange. They are very efficient and don't pose the same risks as conventional water pumps.

**Netting** Cover the pond with netting to keep leaves and trash out of your pond. Some people opt to not cover their ponds over the winter. This is fine if you keep up with netting the leaves out in the fall. Letting them settle to the bottom of the pond over the winter will not only lower the water quality and make it more difficult to clean out your water garden in the spring, but it may also kill your fish over the winter.

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**Friday-Saturday-Sunday 10am-5pm**

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