

Spring Pond Maintenance / Clean-Out

When the water temperature is 40 - 55 degrees Fahrenheit, is an ideal time to check the health of your pond and make plans for the season.

Test water for ammonia, nitrite and pH.

This is also a good time to check your pond and equipment for winter damage. Repair or replace as necessary.

Leaves and other debris can be removed with a skimmer net.

The pond hasn't begun its annual balance and the fish are not as active, so the clean-out won't be as stressful to them.

Every pond is different, some ponds do not need a full annual spring clean-out. If the water looks the same in the spring as it did the previous summer, it's probably okay to skip the clean-out.

If your pond water is in fairly good shape, do a partial clean-out (25% water change).

Remember to add water conditioner to remove chlorine, chloramines and heavy metals found in most tap water.

Also, Add beneficial bacteria products to your pond to boost the biological growth in your pond and mature filters and filter media. Reduce and control toxic ammonia, nitrite and organic waste.

Full Spring Clean-Out

Spring clean-outs are recommended annually for most Northern ponds because of the debris that can build up over the winter. If your pond is larger than 2,000 square feet, it might only need a clean-out every few years.

And larger ponds may never need a complete clean-out because any impurities present are minimal compared to the volume of water in the pond.

The larger the pond, the easier it is to maintain.

Things you may need before starting clean-out:

- An existing pump, inexpensive pump, or a sump pump (or by siphoning)
- large tub, wading pool, (or similar, large container to hold fish)
- Net to cover fish container (to prevent them from jumping out)
- Fish net (to catch fish before clean-out)
- Plant food tabs (for lilies)
- Large container or buckets for collecting debris
- Pressure washer or a high-pressure nozzle on a garden hose
- Bacteria and De-chlorinator if you're filling your pond with city water
- New filter media, mats (if necessary)



Clean-Out

- Start Draining the Pond - Use some of the pond water to fill the large container (wading pool, the exact size will depend on the number and size of fish that you have) with pond water for the fish.
- Drain the pond until it is almost empty and the fish are easy to catch.
- Use a fish net to catch the fish and place them in the container with the water just pumped from the pond.
Cover the container with netting or something similar to keep the fish from jumping out. Remove plants. Keep them moist and out of direct sun.
- Remove sludge/debris from the bottom of the pond with a net or a vacuum.
- Scrub rocks with a bristle brush, pressure washer or a high-pressure nozzle on a garden hose.
- Once the pond is empty, rinse the pond from top to bottom with a garden hose *without* the high-pressure nozzle. This will help wash any remaining pond debris from under the rocks. As the dirty water accumulates on the bottom, continuing to pump it out. Rinse any remaining residue and pump or vacuum out.
- Clean the filters.
- Remove the clean-out pump and begin re-filling your pond with clean water to appropriate level and de-chlorinate.
- Transplant and divide any plants that are filling out their pots. Fertilize the plants with aquatic plant food to jump start their growth. Replace the plants.
- When the water temperature stabilizes, you can return the fish to the pond. There should be no more than three to five degrees difference in temperature between the old and the new water to prevent shock to the fish.
- Add your beneficial bacteria for the recommended start up treatment.