

The Best Backyard Ponds Recreate Nature's Balance

The popularity of backyard ponds continues to grow. Whether you have a garden or not, a small pond can be a wonderful addition to your domestic landscape. Ponds are equally at home in the middle of a manicured lawn or the midst of a relaxing garden. They provide a pleasing visual element that also works as a great stress reducer. Ponds also provide a home to plant and animal life throughout the year.

The number one problem with ponds? You guessed it--keeping it clean and the water clear. Without proper design and maintenance, a backyard pond can quickly become an icky, smell mess. But with good design, ponds that are taken care of will stay clean, clear and inviting.

It's all about balance. You have to balance the ecosystem that you create in the pond. Essentially, the goal is to recreate nature. When ponds are well-balanced, they pretty much clean themselves, and your main job will be to enjoy the result.

Algae growth--that's what you have to watch out for. Algae will grow out of control if you don't add enough plant and animal life to keep it in check. When algae grows aggressively, you'll end up with a murky, unsightly pool of water. You will be able to locate your pond by smell alone, and every mosquito and other bug in the neighborhood will quickly find it as well. Suddenly, you've gone from innocent pond owner to public enemy number one.

Lucky for you that controlling algae is a simple matter. You just have to understand what algae wants and then make sure it doesn't get it. For example, algae must have lots of sun to thrive. Think about how you can block the sunlight naturally. Water lilies would be a good choice. These attractive plants float on top of the water and keep the sunlight from reaching the algae. The end result is that the algae doesn't receive so much encouragement to grow.

Another control for excessive algae growth is the addition of live fish to your pond. The fish will happily munch away on the algae and help you keep it under control. While you're at it, make sure you're not inadvertently feeding the algae. If you let decaying plant matter build up in the pond, you're providing an excellent food source. So keep the dead leaves cleaned out. Or, add some plants that feed on the mineral salts that decaying matter produces. When the algae elbow up to the dinner table, they'll find that the plates are empty.

Don't forget to add plants around the outside of your pond. This addition helps develop a complete ecosystem around your little pond. You'll be able to attract frogs, squirrels, birds and other fauna. These little critters will help out with pest control and contribute to a cleaner, more beautiful pond.

About the Author

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