

Pond Time

It's the season to get your pond ready! Here are a few tips.

Fish will begin to eat when the water is over 50 degrees. It's a good time to clean the pond before they start getting hungry. They will be slow at this point because the water is still cold. They can be rounded up and put in containers if you want to super clean your pond. It's a good idea to remove your fish, the stress is on them is lessened if they are out of the water and not being chased around by your cleaning equipment. Make sure you don't have any lotions or perfumes on your body as they can hurt your fish if you handle them. If you do handle your fish be sure to start at the mouth and slide your hand back over their gills and fins. This way they are protected from being injured by you.

After you get everything out of your pond it can be wet dry vacuumed or simply 'mucked out'. Please don't remove every bit of dirt and scum. Some of it is beneficial to your fish. When filling the pond back up it's always a good idea to have de-chlorinators on hand. Fish will die if subjected to too much chlorine. Follow the directions on the bottle for the amount of treatment for water/chlorine ratio. A backyard well is a superb choice for filling ponds if you have access to one. They are usually high in salt which is beneficial to the slime coat of your fish.

Let your pond sit for a little while to settle any debris. Keep your fish aerated with a bubbler. These can be purchased in the fish department for little cost. They are good to have on hand in situations where a sick tank is needed.

When your pond is back in order and the fish are back in their environment it is a great idea to have submerged plants and cover for them to hide and spawn in. I will cover plants in another article! Have a great time with your pond. If your pond is cleaned and ready for summer you will not have a lot to take care of. Good luck and happy backyard oasis!

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Please send your gardening questions to wichitamg@gmail.com and don't forget to visit our website overthegardengate.org. Now get out and garden!