

Pots To Ponder

You can enjoy a water garden in many places - on a patio, in a courtyard, or on a high-rise balcony - all you need is a container. And even when space isn't an issue, potted ponds are still the first choice of many gardeners.



Why? Because they're so easy to create, look great and can be placed just about anywhere. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- 1. Water lilies will thrive in container ponds**, as long as they receive at least 5-6 hours of direct sunlight a day.
- 2. Tall cube pots (pictured above) work well as water gardens, too** - they're great for narrow areas or side gardens. To create a more landscaped look, set the pot within a garden bed and skirt the base with succulents or low-growing groundcovers.
- 3. If water lilies are your obsession**, then go the whole way and devote a tub to these beautiful summer blooms. For shallow containers, the smaller varieties are the most suitable.
- 4. A water-filled pot is a clever way to add a favourite aquatic plant to a conventional garden bed.** Reeds and rushes, which can be too vigorous for a pond, are kept in check in a container.
- 5. Goldfish** will live happily in a container, as long as it is of moderate size so the water doesn't overheat in summer. They'll also consume any mosquito wrigglers.
- 6. Seek out unusual containers** to give your pond a real edge. This steel trough works beautifully set beside a timber deck.
- 7. When planting out large containers**, always include a few vertical plants to add height. These variegated water irises offer attractive linear leaves, as well as striking spring blooms.
- 8. It's the most simple water feature imaginable** - a water-filled saucer - yet it will add interest to any leafy corner.
- 9. Choose a container that makes a real statement.**
- 10. Exotic lotuses make a spectacular subject for a water pot**, with their broad leaves and gorgeous blooms. Plant one per container - they need lots of space and a warm climate to thrive.

11. Chinese-style blue-and-white pottery looks fabulous in a courtyard - you'll often find large containers like this one in homeware stores. it's planted with large-leaved taro, dwarf papyrus and dwarf Zantedeschia 'White Gnome'. Pink mandevilla flowers add floating colour.

Creating a Pond In a Pot

Easy steps to a potted pond



The best thing about potted ponds is that they're really easy to create. In fact, in essence, there are just three simple steps:

1. Choose your container
2. Fill it with water
3. Immerse the potted plants

Choosing the container

Size is important if you want to grow a selection of plants in your potted pond - the larger your container, the more planting options you'll have. A water-garden container should be a minimum of 30cm deep and 40cm wide. The main prerequisite of your container is that it's watertight, which means that if there are drainage holes (which all plant-growing pots feature), you'll first have to seal them. Use a waterproof sealant such as silicone or Selley's Knead It Aqua.

Planting

Aquatic plants, such as water lilies, are generally sold in black plastic pots from specialist water-garden nurseries. When you get them home, cover the surface of the soil with fine gravel to hold it in place. Then simply immerse the pots in your water-filled container. Different plant species vary in their preferred water-planting depth. To raise plants, just sit the pot on a submerged brick or upturned plant saucer.

Getting the right balance

To keep the water clean and mosquito-free, it's essential to get the right ecology happening in your mini-pond. That means including both fish (to eat the mozzies), and one or two submerged plants to absorb excess nutrients and fish waste, thereby preventing algae from growing. Goldfish are the usual choice, but water-garden nurseries can recommend the right species for your needs.