

WHERE TO START

Material selection for a pond can be daunting. Once the pond type is known, the desired outcomes of the pond are known, and the budget is set, materials can then be chosen. Here are a few questions that should be answered before purchasing materials.

- 1) Will the pond have a waterfall?
- 2) Are fish going to call the pond home?
- 3) Will water plants be put in the pond?
- 4) Is this going to be a "Koi Pond"?

TYPES OF PONDS

Ponds are all different. If a water garden is installed, it will be shallower and not as large as a koi pond.

Water gardens are typically installed to enjoy water lilies, water lotus, and other water plants. They typically have a very small waterfall so the plants are not disturbed and rely heavily on pond plants to filter the water along with the pond filter.

Koi Ponds are deeper than water gardens, have larger [filters](#), larger [pumps](#), some have [bottom drains](#) and [skimmers](#). Care must be taken to protect plants because koi usually devour them. Koi ponds usually have larger waterfalls* to aerate the water.

Fish ponds typically have different types of goldfish like shubunkins, fantails, sarasa commons, calico fantails and commons. Fish ponds usually have [plants](#) and rely on the plants to help filter the water. Fish ponds also have waterfalls and maybe a pond [skimmer](#) to help with maintenance.

*See our Brochure: [How to build a Waterfall](#)

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Materials Checklist

- [Underliner](#)
- [Fish Safe Pond Liner](#)
- [Pond Filter](#)
- [Pond Pump](#)
- [Pond Hose](#)
- [Waterfall Sealant](#)
- [Fish Safe Silicone](#)
- [Fittings](#)
- [Bottom Drain](#) (optional)



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Dig a Pond



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CHOOSING A LOCATION

Ponds should be located in an area that can be seen and heard from several points in the garden and from a vantage point within the home. Trees, slopes, hillsides and other obstacles can be accommodated where in years past they could not. The only “bad” places for pond locations are spots without sun exposure or at the lowest point in a yard where water collects.

DIGGING THE HOLE

It's a good idea to use a garden hose or string to layout the shape of the pond so it can be seen and tweaked to satisfaction before digging the hole.

Excavations should be done so that the following things are accommodated:

A **Plant shelf** around the perimeter of the pond that is a foot wide and slopes ever so slightly towards the bank of the pond or outside edge. This prevents tall marginal [plants](#) from blowing over into the pond.

Garden ponds should be at least 18" deep. Koi ponds should be at least 3' deep. **2' deep** is a good average depth for ponds..

Pond bottoms should be sloped slightly towards one side of the pond so debris collects in a central location

A **6" ledge** below the water level should be dug in above the plant ledge and around the perimeter of the pond for coping stones (edging stones) This gives the pond a “false” edge and hides the pond liner.



CHOOSING EQUIPMENT

If the desired outcome is a healthy, balanced eco-system where animals can survive and that looks appealing, then there are a few critical pieces of material that cannot be overlooked:

- 1) 45Mil Fish Safe [Pond Liner](#): Pond liners are expected to hold a lot of water, a lot of stone weight, be flexible, easily concealable, etc. It cannot be treated with fungicides or algacides like roofing liners. [Underliner](#) should be used to protect the liner from rocks, stonework, tree roots, etc.
- 2) [Pond Pumps](#): Most sump pumps, trash pumps, or other water pumps are not suitable for ponds because they are not continuous duty, are oil cooled, and/or use too much energy to run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, year round.

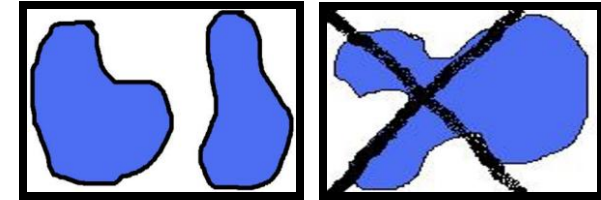


- 3) [Pond pumps](#) and [filters](#) are not necessary if green, cloudy, or muddy water is acceptable. [Pond Plants](#) can be used as a filter but the pond will go through periods of green, cloudy, and murky water more often than it will be clear (Koi Ponds always need [filters](#)). Pond plants should be used together with a [filter](#) and maybe even a [filter with a UV](#) to insure the pond does not turn green.

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DESIGNING THE POND

When designing your pond, avoid extreme coves and alcoves. These areas will become stagnant and cause the pond to be unhealthy.



COMMON SYSTEMS

There are 3 common systems used in garden ponds. There are [skimmer-biofall](#) systems, pressurized systems, and completely submersible systems. Skimmer biofall systems are the easiest to maintain, [pressurized systems](#) keep ponds the cleanest with minimal maintenance, and [submersible systems](#) are very cost effective but a bit harder to maintain.

