

## Ponds

Well-positioned, well-constructed and well-maintained wildlife ponds are welcome!

It is estimated that over one-third of native wildlife ponds have disappeared in the past 50 years, with over three-quarters of those remaining considered to be in poor condition (see, eg [www.froglife.org](http://www.froglife.org)). This has led to loss of wildlife of all sorts, including insects, birds, reptiles and mammals, but most especially the wildlife that live in and immediately around ponds such as dragonflies, toads and frogs – species that are incredibly helpful to allotment gardeners (notes on dragonfly prey: <https://homefarm.club/journal/2019/7/19/allotment-ally-the-dragonflynbsp>).

There are **important guidelines for constructing a wildlife pond** on your Lewes Town Council allotment (see below). See also links below for useful guidance on how to create a wildlife pond.

### **do not:**

- use any form of plastic that is likely to degrade, split, shred, or fragment.
- use kitchen washing up bowls or old paddling pools.
- use bin liners, shower curtains or any light plastic sheeting.
- use permanent materials: no concrete.
- use materials that will be difficult to remove: no enamel bathtubs, no hardcore.
- build a pond that is disproportionate to the size of your plot.
- build a pond that is in any way a hazard for people or wildlife.
- Generally speaking, do not transfer plants or creatures between ponds as this may result in transfer of diseases which, once established, are difficult to eradicate.
- Generally speaking, do not have fish in your allotment pond: fish eat newt and frog spawn and fish or the water in which they are transported may carry diseases.

### **do:**

- Think carefully about pond practicalities.
- Sun and shade: deeper and larger ponds may be fine in full sun; shallower ponds will need a bit of shade.
- Ponds should not be (re-)filled with tap water. Think about how you will top up your pond in hot weather. Do you have a water butt?
- Ponds must be wholly visible and safe for human and animal visitors. Site away from paths and ensure the perimeter of the pond is carefully demarcated.
- Ponds must have a shallow end/beach area, with climbable materials (flat

rocks, wooden ramps, rope ladders) to enable hedgehogs and other small creatures to climb out of deeper water.

- Let nature rule.
- If your pond is well-sited and well-constructed, it will quickly become inhabited by plants and creatures; the best thing you can do is fill it with fresh (not tap) water and let nature take over.
- Provide a healthy surrounding habitat. This might mean “bug hotels” or a small log or flint stonepile, a sheltering fruit bush or vine, *etc*

### **Creating an allotment-friendly pond or bog garden**

FrogLife offer this handy guide, ‘Just Add Water’. *Please ignore the advice to use old household materials like paddling pools*, but apart from that the advice is excellent: <https://www.froglife.org/info-advice/just-add-water/>. There is also a FrogLife ‘Wildlife pond visualiser app’ for Android only – search for ‘Froglife’ on Google Play Store: <https://www.froglife.org/what-we-do/education/come-forth-for-wildlife/come-forth-for-wildlife-neighbourhood-wildlife-corridors/idea-zone/> to help with location, shape and construction.

The Sussex Wildlife Trust has a ‘How to’ guide for creating a mini-wildlife pond: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/MINI-WILDLIFE-POND.png>, or for more options:

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/Big%20or%20small%20ponds%20for%20all%20Wid%20About%20Gardens.pdf>. *Again, ignore the advice to use old household materials like washing up bowls.*

Lastly, consider a bog garden, rather than a pond (or in addition). These shallow areas of water are easier to construct and maintain, and still provide good habitat for wildlife that are useful on the allotment. For suggestions: <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/humble-bog-garden>.