

What's Growing On in the garden?

Germantown Hills School Garden Newsletter

April 2, 2007

Water Gardens

Water gardens come in a variety of sizes and shapes to fit virtually any landscape and budget. They can be small and formal, large with waterfalls or fountains, or as simple as a large pot with water-loving plants.

Installing a small water garden or pond has been a home landscaping trend for the past several years, but homeowners should be aware that maintaining an aquatic environment means more than filling a tub and tossing in some fish.

On page 3 you will find a vast number of resources for pond building. We encourage you to do all your homework before you

start any pond project. However, if you want to start small, think container ponds. Directions to make a container water garden are on page 2.

Below you will find a variety of photos of the pond in our garden. We have added several varieties of water lilies, water hyacinth, pickerel rush, horsetail, lizard's tail and creeping jenny. We have five goldfish - three bright orange fish, one white fish and one brown fish. Our pond has a waterfall that contains the filtration system. At the edge of the pond is the pond skimmer that contains the pump that circulates between the pond and the waterfall. This winter we disconnected the waterfall and ran a pump directly into the pond to keep it from freezing.



The basic pond with shelf ledges for plants, a waterfall and a stream connecting the two.



Rocks line the edges to keep sun away from the liner. Water is maintained to the correct level for the filtration system.



We began to add a few baby plants. Plants keep the surface shaded to reduce algae growth.



After a few weeks, the pond's ecosystem begins to develop. Maintaining a balance is crucial.



Sun-loving flowering perennials add color and beauty to the complete pond garden.



The plants continue to grow and the water lilies flower all summer.



Here is a closeup of one of our flowering water lilies.



The waterfall contains a biological filtration system and also adds oxygen for our fish.



The bridge is added for beauty and safety to cross the stream.

Container Water Garden Recipe

Planning

Pond pots get heavy with water, so assemble the pond pot in its permanent location. You want at least a half day of sun, especially if you want to add any blooming plants. To really control algae, you'll have to shade 70 to 80 percent of the water surface.



One way to counteract algae is to introduce rooted plants, which can absorb nutrients that would otherwise feed algae. The plants also shade the surface of the water, which prevents algae growth. This means if you have any fish in the pond, you won't be able to see much of them.

The Container

- Select your container. Good choices are glazed ceramic pots, galvanized watering troughs or other non-draining container.

The Plants

- 1 Taro plant (*Colocasia alocasia plumbae*)
- 1 Creeping jenny plant (*Lysimachia nummularia*)
- 1 Variegated ribbon grass (*Phalaris arundinacea picta*)
- 1 Chameleon plant (*Houttuynia cordata*)
- 1 Water hyacinth (floaters)
- 1 Water lettuce (floaters)
- Small rocks or gravel
- 1 two- or four-inch empty clay pots

Directions

1. Clean pond pot by rinsing it out well with water.
2. Set the green taro in its original container in the bottom center of the pond pot.
3. Fill pond pot 1/3 full with rocks.
4. Fill the pot half full with water.
5. Place the ribbon grass plant, still in its container, into the small decorative pot, and place that decorative container near the back of the container.
6. Place an inverted clay pot on top of rocks in the front of the pond pot. Now set the Chameleon plant on top of the inverted pot (keep the plant in its original container). Do the same for the

Creeping Jenny, placing the inverted pot and plant on the right side of the pond pot.

7. Bring water level to the top of the container.

8. Place floating plants (water hyacinth and water lettuce) on the surface of the water.

The Extras

- One or two goldfish (depending on the size of the container) may be added to control mosquitos. Or, you may add a mosquito control tablet instead. These are readily available at home improvement stores.
- A few larger rocks or even driftwood can be added. Be creative!

The Care

- Add water as necessary. If you have added fish, be sure to remove chlorine from the water before you add it to the pond.
- Remove dead plant material, leaves and debris.
- Container ponds must be kept from freezing in the winter.
- Remove any algae as necessary. You may find that a chemical found at your local pet shop will help.
- Feed your fish

ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC
ABC	Grade School Teachers' ABC Garden:								ABC
ABC	ABCDE.....E could be for Euphorbia or we could call it by its common name, which isn't quite so melodic---S for "spurge".....that's the bright green foliage growing between the sidewalk and the dry creek bed in the ABC garden by the bell. It's a perennial that spreads nicely once established. If anyone would like a start of it, let me know.								ABC
ABC	-"F" is for forsythia and it is currently blooming! Ours is actually a dwarf variety, so it shouldn't get so big as long as we prune it every few years.								ABC
ABC	-"G and H" are grape hyacinths, just cute little things that last a long time, even as a cut flower.								ABC
ABC	-"I" Alas, we have no "I" yet, but some kind of irises will be planted soon.								ABC
ABC	- "J" is for the blue-rug junipers struggling to exist. These, unfortunately, are having a tough time and we've lost one and the remaining one is not looking well.								ABC
ABC	More letters to be revealed next time!!								ABC
ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC	ABC

Websites and Resources

http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/gl_design_water_features/article/0,1785,HGTV_3575_1397634,00.html

http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/gl_design_water_features/0,1784,HGTV_3575,00.html

http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/gl_design_water_features/article/0,1785,HGTV_3575_2970656,00.html

Please feel free to contact either Cathy or Linda with your garden questions and comments. We encourage you to use the garden as the valuable educational resource that it can be.

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