

How to Design a Lined Garden Pond

This information page is here to help you make an informed decision prior to making a purchase. If you need further help email technical@petsafari.co.uk or 'phone

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& one of our advisors will be pleased to help.



This page is here to help you make an informed decision when planning a design for & subsequently building, a lined Garden Pond. (Flexible sheet lining material).

Using a flexible pond liner as a waterproof membrane for a garden pond is quick & easy & probably the best method possible for the introduction of the maximum number of landscaping techniques. These techniques when employed will ensure the end result is aesthetically pleasing, functional & will provide the correct environment for plants & fish.

Step 1. Siting the Pond. Choose a position which is not directly underneath trees that shed their leaves or in close proximity to plants, shrubs & trees that are known to produce toxic substances. These might include Willow, Laburnum & Yew. Also avoid positioning close to trees with particularly invasive root systems such as Prunus varieties. If possible an area should be chosen that looks as if a pond could have formed there naturally or this effect should be created with subsequent peripheral landscaping.

Step 2. Choosing Design Elements. A pond can be created very quickly with the minimum of features & will soon attract a host of insects & amphibians to your garden. Together with in-pond & complimentary around pond planting your garden will be completely transformed. In order to ensure success, all ponds should have a number of standard features incorporated into the design & consideration may be given to other design elements dependent upon scale, budget, desirability & D.I.Y. skill level.

Step 3. Standard Design Elements. a). Marginal Shelf. This should extend part of the way around the interior of the pond & be about 6" to 9" deep (15-23cm). This shelf will provide an area for baskets of Marginal Plants. These plants will grow upwards to provide colour, form & perspective above the water surface.

b). Deep Water Area. This should be a minimum of 18" (45cm) deep although 24" (60cm) or even deeper is better to provide an area for deep water plants & in which the fish can over-winter. Some pond designs allow for three depths, 9, 18, & 30" (15, 45 & 75cm) which are classified as "Marginal", "Deep Water Marginal", & "Deep Water" allowing the introduction of the maximum numbers of plant varieties.

Step 4. Considering Optional Design Elements. There are a number of design elements that you may wish to consider to further enhance the design & increase the variety of the pond environment. If you wish you can pick & choose from these to create a pond that best suits your budget & available garden space.

Step 5. Optional Design Elements. a). Cobbled Beach. A Cobbled Beach feature provides a gently sloping area which allows easy entry to & an exit from the pond for frogs, toads & newts. It also creates an escape route for small animals such as hedgehogs & field mice that may otherwise find themselves trapped in the pond with possibly fatal consequences!

b). Bog Garden Area. A Bog Garden immediately adjacent to the pond itself provides an interesting extension to the main pond area. This can contain moisture loving, as well as marginal plants, some varieties of which may already have been planted on the marginal shelf. Using

some of the same plants in both areas creates an interesting interface between the pond & terrestrial areas & the bog garden also helps in the creation of a localized micro climate greatly benefitting the pond environment. Amphibians are also happier when this type of area exists & the variety of insect visitors such as the beautifully elegant Dragon Fly increases dramatically.

c). Natural Stone Surround. Many books show the pond perimeter being finished off with stone, concrete flags & more recently decking, all of which overhang the edge slightly. Whilst this is okay, it does mean that unless the pond is completely full at all times, a band of black pond liner material is visible that in my opinion, detracts from the look of the feature. Also if the pond is slightly out of level the same result is evident permanently. An alternative method of construction is to create a stone surround* where the pond liner is fitted underneath & behind stonework to the entire perimeter of the pond. With this method pond liner is never visible irrespective of water level & some small leeway on construction levels is available. This design consideration does, however, require a greater degree of D.I.Y. skill & would increase the size of the liner, the amount of materials used in the construction & hence the overall cost of the project.

*For more formal or contemporary ponds the same technique can utilise alternative materials such as brick, stainless steel or hard wood.

d). Gravel filled Marginal & Lily Planting Areas. Traditional methods of construction provide a marginal shelf & deep water area & plants are positioned on the appropriate level in individual pond baskets. Again this is perfectly acceptable but for a more natural look, gravel filled planting areas may be an alternative. This can easily be achieved by building the equivalent of a stone or brick retaining wall on the marginal & in the deep water area & back filling with washed (inert, lime free) pea gravel. Plants can then be planted out directly into the gravel medium.

For details about how to construct these optional design elements, see the information sheet "How to Build a Lined Garden Pond".

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Version V2