

# Country Gardens

## Spring Pond Start-Up

### Spring Clean-Up

Tools Needed: shovel, broom, hose with spray nozzle, water treatments (de-chlorinator, Stress Coat, etc) holding tank for fish, wet newspapers, thermometer

When: Now!, before the temperatures rise  
Slight cloud cover with some moisture

Step 1: Drain pond, using recirculating pump while filling a holding tank for fish approximately 2/3 full with the pond water. Remove fish and plants as water level drops

\*\*Tip-Cover plants with wet newspaper and mist as needed so they do not dry out

Step 2: Use broom and shovel to remove sludge at bottom of pond. Spray sides of pond and waterfall with pressure to remove dirt and algae (Do not scrub or use soaps or cleaners.)

\*\*Tip-Leave some algae on sides for fish to feed off of when they are returned to pond

Step 3: Re-fill pond leaving small amounts of algae on the sides for the fish to nibble on and re-establish the bio-system. Add de-chlorinator and other water treatments.

Step 4: Start pump, filters, UV sterilizers, etc to get water recirculating

Step 5: Fill the remainder of your holding tank with tap water (using de-chlorinator) before returning fish and plants to pond. This will help adjust the fish to the new water.

\*\*Tip-If temperature in new water is greater than 10 degree difference from old water, float fish in bags to adjust fish gradually.

### Plants

Spring is the best time to re-pot or divide most aquatic plants. Avoid harsh disruptions to the roots of early flowering plants such as Iris, as it may preclude this years blooms. Hardy plants can be returned to their places in the pond after cleaning. Some may need to be divided or transplanted. When you transplant and divide aquatic plants you should use heavy garden soil rather than the commercial potting soils (they tend to be very light and make a mess in your pond ). A plastic or clay pot will do. Line the bottom of the pot with newspaper to prevent the soil from running through the holes. Cover the top with sand or stone to keep the soil from floating out the top. This is also a good time to fertilize your plants with Pondtabbs Aquatic Plant Fertilizer. Tropical plants can be done the same way, however, they should be held inside until the danger of frost has passed (Mid May - Late May).

### Fish

As the temperature rises, fish are becoming more active. Keep a check on the temperature of the water. When the temperature reaches 50 degrees F you can begin feeding. Only feed them what they will eat in 5 minutes. Gradually work them up to their normal feeding schedule as the temperatures rise. Spring is a good time to medicate the pond if you notice any signs of infection on your fish. Weak fish may benefit from medicated fish food for 10-14 days.

To find the gallons in a pond:

$\text{Length} \times \text{Width} \times \text{Depth} \times 7.48 = \text{Gallons in a pond.}$

For a circle:

$3.14 \times (1/2 \text{ diameter} \times 1/2 \text{ diameter}) \times \text{depth} \times 7.48 = \text{Gallons in a pond}$

## Spring Shopping List

<b>Thermometer</b>	The most useful tool you can have for guiding you through your ponds life cycle.
<b>Pond Water Conditioner</b>	Essential to remove and neutralize chlorine, chloramine and heavy metals. <b>Chlorine &amp; Heavy Metal Neutralizer, Aquasafe, or Carefree Dechlorinator Plus</b>
<b>Fish Conditioner</b>	Helps to heal fish and replace slime coat. <b>Stress Coat, Carefree Dechlorinator Plus, Micorbe-Lift TheraP</b>
<b>Start Up Bacteria</b>	To be used to seed biological filters and start up the eco-system in your pond. Start after water temperature has reached 50F for 5-7 days. Shut down UV sterilizer during application and for 7 days after. <b>ABA, Microbe-Lift PL, Biofilter Booster</b>
<b>Enzyme Bacteria</b>	Help to break down organic sludge that is missing in the cleaning or builds up throughout the season to keep the pond healthy. <b>Ecofix, Pond Zyme, Clarity Max, Microbe-Lift Spring &amp; Summer, Aquazyme</b>
<b>Water Clarifier</b>	To help clear water clouded by dirt and debris. Should be used with a mechanical filter. <b>Accuclear, Pond Water Clarifier</b>
<b>Filter Media</b>	It is best to change filter media in the spring before beneficial bacteria get started. Also change skimmer pads. <b>Lava Rock, Polyester Matting, Bio Max Media, Laguna Foam Media</b>
<b>UV Sterilizer</b>	It is best to bring in old light to be sure of model when buying new bulbs. Good idea to change washer and gaskets when you replace bulb. Be sure to check for leaks before turning the light back on.
<b>Net</b>	To be used for moving fish and skimming debris.
<b>Algae Control</b>	Ponds often experience a algae bloom in the spring before plants are introduced and the eco-system is established <b>Algaefix, Pond Water Clarifier, Terra Pond, Barley, Phos X, Green Clean</b>
<b>Fish Health Care</b>	Parasites and bacteria are active in water temperatures between 45-55F; however, fish immune systems do not become active until temperatures rise over 50F. Parasites can be more effectively controlled in water temperatures over 60F <b>Melafix, Paracide Green, Desafin, Non-iodized or Sea Salt, Pimafix, SurCure</b>
<b>Fish Food</b>	When water temperatures are above 45F for a full week, you can start feeding leafy vegetable and soaked grains (cheerios). Start feeding sparingly (every 2-3 days) with low protein food when the water temperatures stay over 50F <b>Sho-Koi Impact, PondCare Spring &amp; Autumn, Tetra Wheat Germ, Microbelift Fruits &amp; Greens, Blue Ridge Fish Food</b>

<b>Plant Fertilizer</b>	Although plants do not utilize fertilizer until the water has warmed up, it is most convenient to fertilize at the time of re-potting <b>Florafin, Pondtabbs</b>
<b>New Pots</b>	Line pots that have holes in the bottom with newspaper
<b>Soil, Sand or Stone</b>	Use a heavy aquatic soil or garden dirt to plant aquatics in. Cover newly planted soil with sand or stone so soil does not cloud water.
<b>Water Test Kits</b>	Maintain good water quality. Check for pH (7.0-7.5 is ideal), Nitrites (0 is ideal), Ammonia (0 is ideal)
<b>Silk Aquatic Plants</b>	For those that cannot wait until May for the real ones.
<b>Pansies</b>	For early spring color around the pond.

**Remember that when you are adding any water treatment to your pond, it is important to add the correct dosage based on the number of gallons in the pond. Do not over-treat the pond by adding too much or using more than one product at a time.**

To find the gallons in a pond  
 $\text{Length} \times \text{Width} \times \text{Depth} \times 7.48 = \text{Gallons in a pond.}$

For a circle:  
 $3.14 \times (1/2 \text{ diameter} \times 1/2 \text{ diameter}) \times \text{depth} \times 7.48 = \text{Gallons in a pond}$

(There are 7.48 gallons of water per cubic foot.)

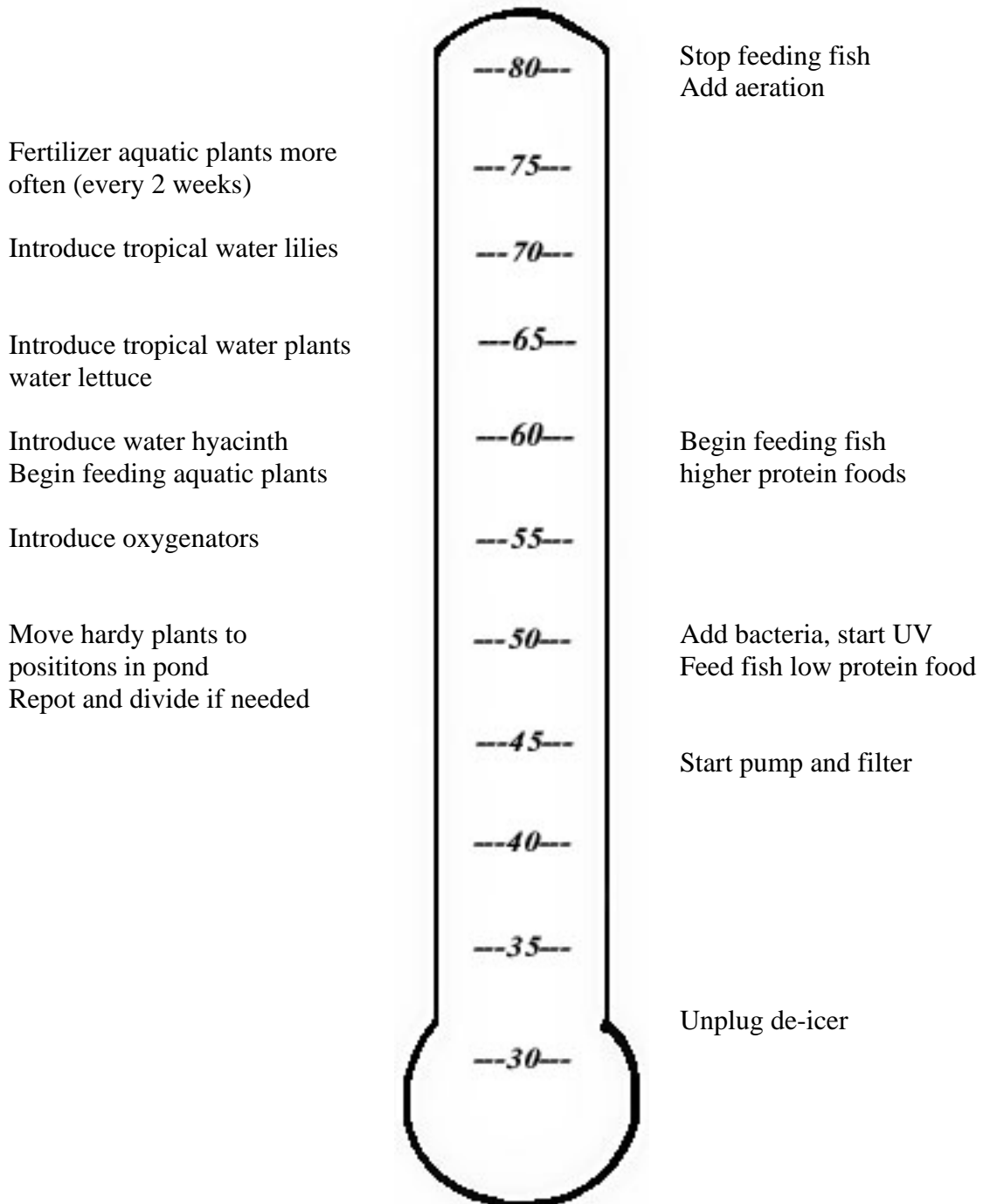
**\*\*Tip\*\***

*If you are filling your pond or replacing the entire pond volume you can calculate the pond volume by reading your water meter before starting and after finishing. The difference will be the gallons in your pond provided no other water was used during this time.*

# Spring Pond Start-Up

The following guidelines will help to get your pond started as the temperatures begin to rise.

Average Temperature  
of Pond Water (Farenheit)



# ***Fish Health Guide***

If your fish look sick, fish are dying or you think that something is just not right in the pond, the following will help to determine the problem

1.     **Check pond environment:**  
Test for ammonia, nitrite, and pH  
Be sure oxygen levels remain adequate at all times  
Consider chlorine or chloramine poisoning from untreated tap water  
Consider fertilizer or pesticide runoff from surrounding areas  
Consider an overload of fish for pond size
  
2.     **Correct environmental stress factors before using medications.**  
Do partial or complete water changes as needed to reduce toxicity of water contaminants  
Pumps should run 24 hours a day during spring and summer months  
Thin fish population if more than 2" of fish are present per square foot surface area
  
3.     **Calculate pond volume**  
Medications are often administered based on gallons of pond water  
Measure pond volume as accurately as possible to avoid over or under dosing.  
    Length x Width x Depth x 7.48 = gallons of a rectangle.  
    3.14 x (1/2 diameter x 1/2 diameter) x depth x 7.48 = gallons in circle  
    \*\*Use measurement in feet.  
    or   Check water meter when you fill the pond and calculate gallons.
  
4.     **When environment is healthy**  
Treat with proper medication  
Use only one water treatment as a medication at a time (i.e. do not use Formalin and Paracide Green together) since some medications use the same active ingredient and you would be overdosing the pond. The exception would be salt, it can be used in conjunction with many medications.  
Use a medicated fish food in conjunction with a water treatment if needed  
Salt will kill aquatic plants and algae therefore polluting the pond and increasing stress.  
Remove excess algae or plants before treating with salt.

Often, there are several factors affecting the health of your fish. Environmental stress may cause parasitic problems which in turn may cause bacterial diseases. Many times medications will not help to heal your fish. Weigh the value of the fish against the cost of the medications before going to extremes to save a fish. Always follow directions on the bottle and be sure there is plenty of oxygen in the water. Many medications are hampered by cold water.