

# PONDLADY'S INFO CENTER

## How To Build a Pond: Location And Design

There are many kinds of garden ponds. When you are designing your pond, you must consider your lifestyle. Is it formal and therefore you'll want a formal pond, a rectangle, circle or other regular geometric shape? If this is the case, usually the pond is built from concrete or gunnite and might be covered with masonry or tile both in and out. The formal pond usually holds a fountain or statuary. Sometimes it is a reflecting pool with no fish or vegetation and needs to be treated like a swimming pool. Other ponds are informal with rocks or boulders placed around the pond. A roaring waterfall or trickling stream might be the moving water feature rather than a formal fountain.

This pond might also be chlorinated, but most have vegetation, fish and are treated as a balanced ecosystem. The pond must fit the lifestyle of the owners.

After the style is determined, we must know the type of pond to be installed. The koi pond is a special type of pond and needs much filtration, must be deeper than most other ponds, is treated like a very large outdoor aquarium and must be taken care of like one. The filters must be cleaned regularly, the koi must be fed daily, and most of the time, there is no vegetation growing because the koi will eat it....and they will eat it FAST. If goldfish only are placed in a pond, the maintenance is less, but only if the goldfish are not fed. If they are fed, the fish will grow larger than the pond can support, keep having babies and sooner or later there will be a fish kill. To have a balanced ecosystem and therefore the least maintenance, the goldfish must survive in the pond with existing vegetation, working daily for their room and board.

So after the style and type of pond are determined, the location is the next most important factor in pond installation. I always recommend the pond be as close to the viewing area as possible. The pond/bog plants move in the breeze, the waterfall makes a delightful noise and the fish are colorful to watch. If the pond is in a far corner of the yard, chances are the owners will not enjoy it as much as if it is near a den or kitchen window or even a bedroom window that can be left open in good weather. I usually determine what room of the house the owner spends the most time in and decide the location from there.

So before installing the pond, at least three things must be decided:

- Style
- Type
- Location

After these decisions are made the rest is easy!

## How To Build a Pond: Getting Started

To build your pond, you will need the following:

1. A shovel
2. A rake
3. 14" 28 gauge roofing flashing
4. 1/2" PVC pipe cut into @ 2' pieces
5. 15# roofing felt for underlayment
6. Pond liner Pump, hose clamps, tubing for waterfall



## How To Build a Pond: Digging The Hole

When digging, do not break the edges of the pond. They hold your decorative rocks and if disturbed during the digging process, may break down due to the weight of the rocks. If the sides of the pond are soft, you must reinforce them as you see in the picture. I use 28 gauge roofing flashing and support it with PVC pipe stakes.

Dig almost vertically to 14" inches. Place the excavated dirt in a ring about one foot away from the outer edge of the pond. You will need it later to finish off the pond. Install flashing, hold in place with PC pipe. Crimp top edge of flashing toward the outside of the pond so sharp edge does not penetrate liner.



## How To Build a Pond: Level & Felt Placement

Level the bottom for placement of plants. Clip off any protruding roots and smooth the sides and bottom well. Cover all exposed surfaces with 15 pound roofing felt, which serves as a cushion for the liner.



## How To Build a Pond: Calculating the Size of the Liner

Length of the liner = the overall length of the pond plus twice the maximum depth plus three feet.

Width of the liner = the overall width of the pond plus twice the maximum depth plus three feet.

## How To Build a Pond: Liner Placement

Open the liner and spread it across the hole. Pleat or fold the liner as the pond begins to fill up with water to make the bottom and sides as smooth as possible.



## How To Build a Pond: Rock Placement

After the pond is almost full, place the first layer of decorative stones or bricks around the sides overhanging by about 2 inches. You may pile the rocks one or more layers thick depending on how high you wish to raise the level of the pond above ground level. You will need about one ton of 1" - 4" flat veneer rocks for a 6' x 10' pond. If you build a waterfall, you will need more.



## How To Build a Pond: Placing the Final Rocks

When you get one or two layers of rocks on top of the liner, stand inside the pond, grasp the edge of the liner and pull it over the bottom layer of rocks about six inches. Put another row of rocks on top. Make sure no liner is showing through the cracks-cover cracks with thinner rocks. Finish filling the pond.

You have built your pond slightly above the level of the rest of your yard so that it will not collect runoff from surrounding areas. Also the water above ground level gives the pond enough weight to keep it in its place when the water table gets high. And the bottom layer, (now under water) not only looks great and completely hides the liner, it also serves as a hiding and spawning place for fish.



## How To Build a Pond: Completion

Rake the excavated dirt back toward the pond as backfill to cover up the liner that is showing above the ground. Gently grade it down and use it as a planting area. Put dechlorinator in the water if you live where the water is chlorinated. Now you are ready for plants and fish.

## How To Build a Pond: Landscaping

You may plant whatever you like around the pond. I use native plants as much as possible. I also try to use mounding plants so they will drape over the rocks and into the water. I like to have plants that creep around the rocks and partially cover them as the seasons pass. Soon your pond will look as if it has been there forever.



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