

How To Build A Simple Garden Pond



Water is an essential part of all ecosystems. A tyre pond not only provides a useful and attractive way to re-use materials which may otherwise go to land fill but provides a useful component of any garden. A tyre pond can become a focal point in any garden, hold excess rainfall that would otherwise run off your property, be used to grow water plants such as watercress, waterchestnut, arrowhead and kang kong and become a water source and habitat for local birds, frogs, lizards and insects, essential to pest control in any garden.

By following the suggestions below, you could easily establish this pond in half a day or less. When you add plants and fish, consider that it might all take a good couple of weeks/months for everything to settle in, just enjoy the process and relish the outcome.

Constructing The Pond

The simplest type of pond you could make in your garden is a tyre pond. Using a large, non-steel belted tyre (such as a truck tyre) is the best choice for this, as it allows more surface area to grow a wide range of aquatic plants. To create your pond, you will need to obtain a piece of flexible PVC liner (make sure it is UV resistant and heavy duty or it will deteriorate after a few years), some newspaper as an underlay and a good shovel to dig the hole.

1. To begin, carefully cut the rim off one side of the tyre, this can be done using a sharp blade and water as a lubricant.
2. Place the tyre on the ground where you want the pond to be (preferably where the excess water flows off your property) and mark it out with your shovel. Remove the tyre, and dig out the area slightly deeper than the tyre is.
3. Sit the tyre in the hole making sure it is level and dig a deeper hole (at least 50 cm deep) around the tyre's centre. This will leave a ledge for the tyre to sit on.
4. Remove any sharp material from the soil and place overlapping layers of newspaper (about 10 sheets thick) to cover all parts of the hole (wetting it as you go to stop the newspaper moving around).
5. Place the liner into the pond and smooth it down as much as possible, then set the tyre back into place.
6. Once the liner is installed, you can immediately fill the pond with water.
7. Lastly, trim the excess liner, place rocks around the edge of your new pond, and soil or compost into the rim of the tyre, and wait for the animals to move in.

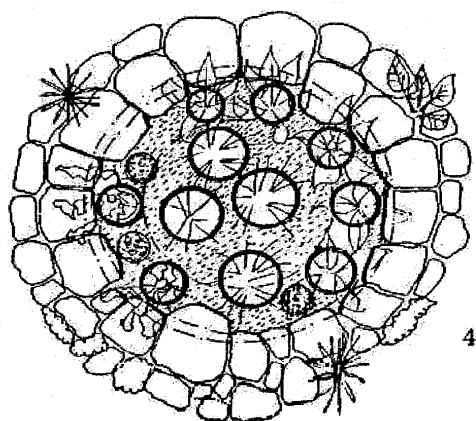
The plants you choose to grow in your pond can be placed in submerged pots, planted around the rim of the tyre, surround the pond, or may float freely.

To keep down mosquito populations, you could encourage local frogs that eat mosquitoes and their larvae, introduce native/ indigenous 'top feeding fish', or you could use Azolla (Azolla spp.) for a fast spreading plant that also provides oxygen to the water.

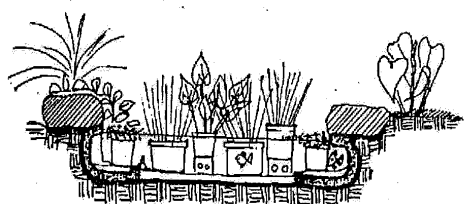
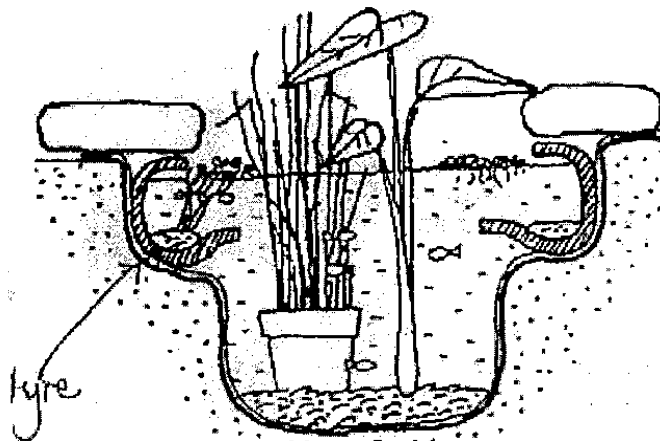
If the Azolla grows too quick, you can harvest it for compost by scooping it out. If you are keeping fish in your pond, test the nutrient levels of the water, as Azolla may provide excess nitrogen to the pond water, which can harm the fish.

Water lilies are probably the most commonly grown pond plants, and aside from their beauty, provide food from their seeds, rhizomes and stems. Water chestnuts (*Eleocharis dulcis*) and its native cousin Tall Spikerush (*E. sphacelata*) can be planted directly into pots. Water Chestnut rhizomes should be harvested when their hollow stems turn yellow and die down. Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) can be grown in pots as well, and also provides an edible (somewhat larger) rhizome.

Other *Colocasia* species may also provide leaves for stir frying and wrapping food in. Kang Kong (*Ipomoea aquatica*) is a trailing pond plant that provides edible young leaves and shoots, it can be planted around the rim of the pond, or in pots. For more information on edible water plants, consult a Native Food Plant or Permaculture book.



Plan of Tyre Pond



Elevation of Tyre Pond



Interesting Tyre Facts

Without them it might be difficult to get from A to B. But what do we do with them when we are finished with them? Each year 180 million used tyres or 170,000 tonnes are generated in Australia and is enough to fill the MCG up to five times. While some tyres are used most end up in stock piles. So why not build a Tyre Pond in your Garden.