



Water Gardening in the Spring

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Water gardening is a year-round project, but in the winter and spring the least amount of work is required. Make sure the pond hasn't had any structural damage or leaking. This usually occurs in the waterfall/stream area. Look for wet areas around rocks. You may have to use spray-expanding foam to fill in where rocks have moved, as well as in cracks. Is your water line changing? There may be a hole in the liner, which could either be caused by expansion or puncture. This mainly happens at the water line, and when refilling it will drain down to the line. Look for areas on the liner that are worn or scratched. You can use silicone sealant or a liner repair kit.

Next, try a 1/3rd water change if the water has a lot of decaying matter in it. First, dredge the bottom of the pond with a net to get out all solid matter that you may have missed during the winter, but drain no more than a third. Refill with water that has been dechlorinated (if needed). You can use beneficial bacteria called **SPRING/SUMMER CLEANER** By **MICROBE-LIFT** that will help dissolve solid matter that has built up during the winter months.

Set up your filter system when the temperatures have stabilized around 50 degrees F. it may be time to replace the filter foam, which lasts for about two seasons before breaking down. Watch for algae blooms when temperatures warm. Remove string algae by hand using a toilet brush. You can use **GREENCLEAN** or other types of string algae controllers, like barley straw.

Move submerged aquatics and lilies closer to the water's surface until the water has cleared or if the plants require deeper water. Lilies will need to eventually be in water that is about 18' to 24' deep, and marginal or bog plants need 6' to 8' deep. Remove dead leaf matter on marginal plants and pull any excess roots that may be running on the sides and bottom of the pond. This is especially necessary for invasive plants like water clover and celery. Get ready to divide water lilies and bog plants around late May to early June when new growth sprouts. Start to add new plants to your pond about mid-May to the first of June. Winter hardy plants; continue adding until the end of September. For naturally clean clear water, use the following recipe. **For up to 400 gallons of water you need:**

- v v 1 water lily (tropical or winter hardy) *Nymphaea* spp
- v v 2 bog or marginal plants (tropical and winter hardy) I advise at least one Cattail
- v v 1 to 2 floaters (tropical) Water Hyacinth or Duckweed
- v v 1 oxygenator for every square foot of water surface, usually found in bunches of five.
(Usually winter hardy) Hornwort or Anacharis

Don't feed fish when temperatures are too cool, wait until night temperatures are above 50 degrees. Only feed every other day as long as the fish are eating, then increase frequency as temperatures increase. Salt your pond at this time to prevent parasites and bacterial diseases, but not enough to cause problems for the plants. Provide shade for your fish by using a shading compound (dye) in the water. Put large PVC piping on the floor of the pond so that fish have a place to hide from predators. As the temperatures rise, the oxygen level goes down; be sure to continue aeration or recirculation of the water to prevent stagnation.