n the last century, more than half of all ponds in the UK countryside have been lost.

With more than two thirds of freshwater species relying on pond habitats, one of the best things that you can do to add wildlife value to your garden or neighbourhood is to install a wildlife pond.

1. Siting your pond

The positioning of your pond is key

to its success. Too much light and you

will risk an algal infestation, but site it

underneath an overhanging tree and

you will be forever netting leaves out

of it in autumn. The ideal location is a

sheltered southwest-facing spot which

is at least partially shaded. It's always

a good idea to mark out the shape of

your pond with rope or a hose pipe

before you get the spade out.

Turf, gravel or

flagstones can be

used to cover the

edge of the pond liner

These freshwater havens can be as big or small as you like, even an upturned dustbin lid sunk into the ground and filled with water will soon be a hive of activity. And if you don't have a garden, you could consider contacting the owner of a local green space to see if they would be interested in installing a wildlife pond with you.

A sloping ledge or

animals that fall in

can climb back out

included so that any

ramp should be

3. Filling your pond

Before filling with water, it's a good idea to put a 5-10cm deep substrate such as sand or washed gravel into the bottom of your pond. Next, fill the pond with water. Rainwater is by far the best, but if this isn't practical, you can make do with tap water. Once filled, trim the liner to size, leaving plenty of overlap to fall into the perimeter trench. Finally, backfill the trench with soil and place turf, flagstones or gravel over any exposed liner at the pond edges to avoid it degrading in sunlight.

Emergent plants will

send their leaves and

flowers up above the

water's surface

Planting baskets can

introducing plants to

be used when first

your pond



Marginal plants

will grow happily

around the edge

of your pond

Species that could benefit from your pond include:























Native plants for your pond



Floating-leaved plants

around the perimeter.

Amphibious bistort – oval leaves and little pink flowers; favours a water depth of at least 30-60cm.

2. Constructing your pond

Once you are certain of the location

of your pond, it's time to dig. Ideally,

overhanging pond liner to drop into.

the pond needs to be at least 90cm at its deepest

so that your pondlife can escape the ice in winter,

but you'll need to dig around 15cm further down

to accommodate the liner and 'under-cushion' (see

below). It's also a good idea to dig a planting shelf at

around 45cm deep to sit your planters on. Finally, dig

Remove any sharp stones or other objects from

the bottom of the hole and then put down 5cm of

under-cushioning. This could be sand, old carpet or

even newspapers. Next, unroll a butyl liner and line the

hole with it, allowing the edges to drop into the trench

a trench around the perimeter of the pond for the

Water crowfoot – indented leaves and simple white flowers that appear in early spring.



Submerged aquatic plants

Water starwort – a mat-forming oxygenator that grows in 15-60cm deep water.

Floating-leaved plants

are good places for the

dragonflies and newts

eggs of pond snails,

Hornwort – a hardy submerged perennial that dies back in winter but returns in spring.



Submerged aquatic

plants oxygenate the

water and provide

cover for pondlife

Emergent plants

High foliage around

will help to provide

cover and shade

some of the perimeter

Flowering rush – clusters of pink flowers on a 1m-tall stem appear in late summer.

Bog bean – delicate star-shaped flowers appear in summer above wide mats of leaves.



A planting ledge

plants that prefer

shallower water

is useful for

Marginal plants

Water forget-me-not – clusters of small, pale blue flowers appear in spring or early summer.

POND SAFETY!

Ponds can be hazardous places. Young

children should be supervised at all times

when near water. Visit rospa.com for more

tips on pond safety.

Yellow iris – grows up to 1.5m in height with branched stems and large, yellow flowers.



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