AquariumIndustries

Caring for Fish in Ponds

Fish for Ponds

There are a variety of fish that can be kept in fish ponds depending on where you are in Australia. The type of fish chosen may also vary depending on what effect is wanted e.g. frog friendly, native etc.

The most commonly kept species are Goldfish, an ideal fish to keep in garden ponds throughout Australia. They are small, inexpensive, very hardy and add much colour to the pond. The hardy varieties such as Common Goldfish, Comets, Shubunkins and Fantails are ideal, with more care needed for fancy varieties such as Oranda and Ryukin. Other species that can be kept with goldfish in ponds throughout Australia include Murray River Rainbow, Golden Medaka, Whitecloud, Silver Perch, Tandanus Catfish. In warmer regions other species including most natives and particularly Rainbowfish can be kept in ponds (NB: There may be state government restrictions on what species can be kept in ponds, check with your local Fisheries Department if you are not sure).

Sizing and Location of pond

Small to large ponds are fine though the depth should be at least 80 cm to avoid extreme temperatures during summer and winter. (NB: check with your local council if fencing is required for your pond due to the depth. Requirements vary from council to council.) As Australian summers can be very hot, some shade from trees etc can be beneficial. Alternatively the pond can be set up to offer shady areas through overhanging rocks or plants that allow fish to escape from strong sunlight. These areas may also offer refuge from birds and other predators as well.

Tips for new ponds and cleaning existing ponds

Spring is the ideal time to clean out your pond or set up a new one. Some tips include:

- Drain dirty water, scrub algae from pond surfaces and do those repairs that have been put off (resealing liners etc).
- Pond filters should be cleaned out and filter material replenished or replaced as needed.
- UV filter should be cleaned and replace the UV bulb if needed – these generally need to be replaced once per year.
- Water change and add a good quality water conditioner such as Tetra Aquasafe, as well as conditioning salts and pH buffer if needed (the pH should be between 6.8 and 7.4). Regular water changes may also help to keep water quality suitable for your fish.
- Ensure good oxygen levels through the addition of a pond pump which creates water movement. Ensure that the water surface is disturbed by the current or fountain created by the pump. This allows for easy transfer of oxygen into the water and releases CO_2 (excreted from fish constantly, and plants at night) from the water.
- Regular cleaning of the filter compartment will prevent the pump clogging (which reduces water flow) and will remove solid wastes.
- Re-pot or add water plants such as water lilies, elodea or duckweed (floats on top to provide some cover). The plants are an important part of the eco-system as they use up nutrients and out-compete algae that would otherwise grow.
- Regular pruning of aquatic vegetation, removal of fallen leaves, rotting plants, and uneaten food will prevent build up of toxins and reduce algae growth.
- Pond Fish only require feeding once per day as they will also feed on plant matter and insect larvae.

Tips for warming weather conditions

- New Season Syndrome can occur as weather starts to warm. This results in fish producing large amounts of mucus, giving the skin a patchy or rough appearance – while this can look bad fish recover from this quickly as the weather warms and rarely results in deaths. Refer to Care Sheet for more info.
- In the warmer months water will need to be topped up regularly to compensate for evaporation. You will also need to perform more water changes to ensure that the water quality is acceptable.
- Another important factor when the temperature rises is that there is less oxygen available in warmer water, so ensure that the water has surface movement to promote gas exchange.
- Do not overfeed in warmer weather as this may deplete oxygen levels in the water and lead to bacterial or algal blooms.

Ponds