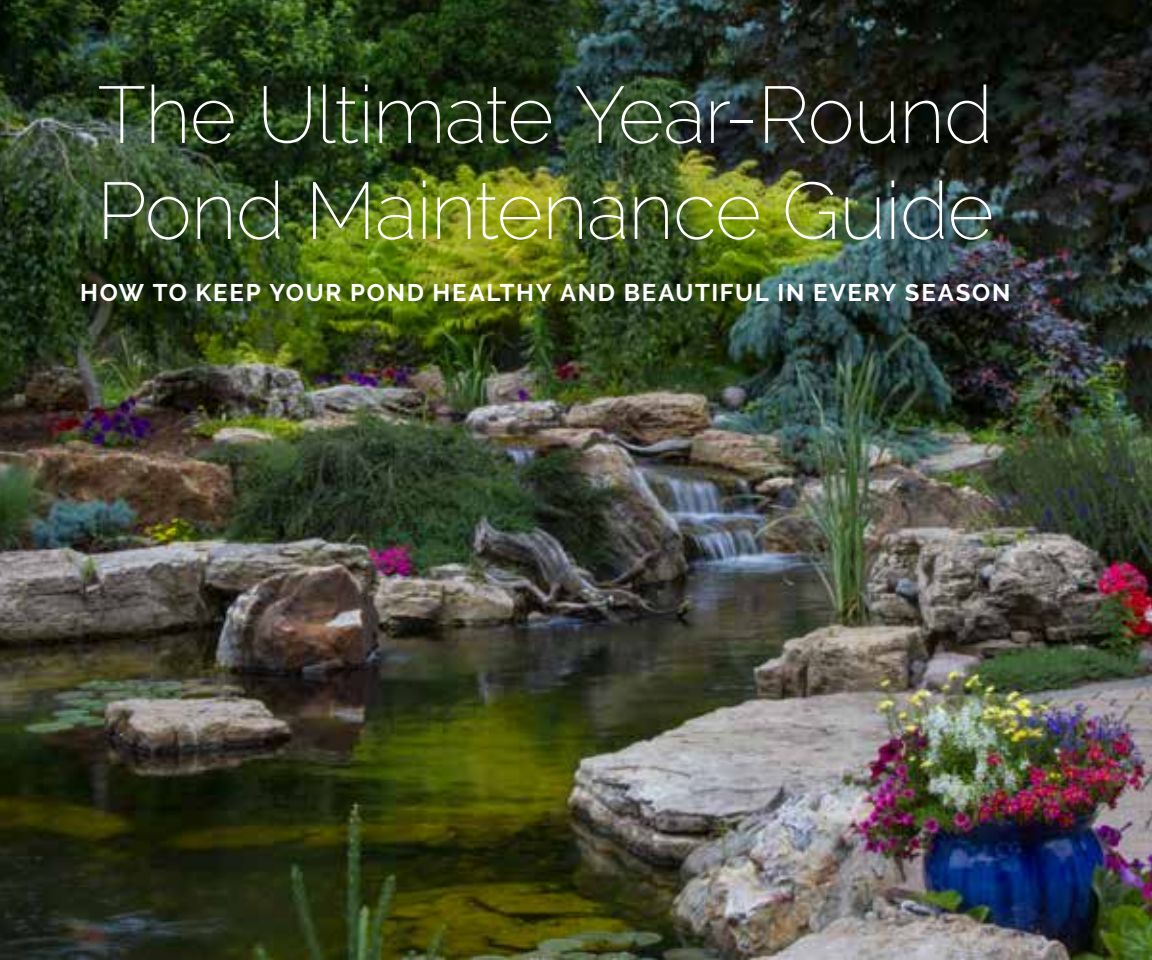


The Ultimate Year-Round Pond Maintenance Guide

HOW TO KEEP YOUR POND HEALTHY AND BEAUTIFUL IN EVERY SEASON






UNDERSTANDING YOUR POND'S NATURAL RHYTHM

A pond is more than a beautiful backyard water feature; it's a living ecosystem that changes with the seasons. From the first sprout of a lily pad in spring to the quiet, frosty stillness of winter, your pond experiences a natural cycle of growth, activity, and rest.

Caring for your pond throughout the year doesn't have to be complicated. By understanding the simple concepts of how temperature, sunlight, and biological processes affect your water feature, you can keep it balanced and thriving all year long.

Each season presents unique maintenance tasks that support the health of your fish, plants, and water quality. This guide walks you through what to do in spring, summer, fall, and winter, helping you easily maintain a clean and clear pond that provides enjoyment and relaxation in every season – not only for you, but for your pond inhabitants, as well. 

SPRING: WAKE UP YOUR POND


Spring marks the start of your pond's active season. As the water warms, fish wake from dormancy, plants begin to grow, and your ecosystem reawakens. This is the time to give your pond a clean, healthy start for the months ahead.

1 Clean Out Winter Debris

When temperatures are consistently above freezing, remove any accumulated leaves, twigs, and sediment from the pond bottom. Clean your skimmer basket, filter pads, and any pre-filters to restore water flow and filtration efficiency.

Some pond owners opt for a complete [spring clean-out](#), draining part or all of the water to wash rocks and remove any built-up sludge. This allows



A photograph of a garden pond with a waterfall. The pond is surrounded by large, dark grey rocks. A blue hose is visible in the background, and a yellow hose is in the foreground. The background shows a grey fence and some green plants.

Watch our [video](#) to learn how to perform a spring cleanout

you to inspect rockwork, lighting, and plumbing before refilling. You can choose to perform the clean-out yourself, or hire a [Certified Aquascape Contractor](#) in your area to do it for you.

It's a good idea to add [Protect for Ponds](#) after a spring clean-out to help the fish recover from the stress of their homelife being disrupted. After a month of using this treatment, you can switch to [Maintain for Ponds](#) for your ongoing treatment.



2 Refill and Detoxify the Water

When topping off or refilling your pond after a cleanout, always treat tap water with a [pond detoxifier](#) to remove chlorine or other harmful chemicals before reintroducing fish. Check that your pump, filtration system, and aeration are functioning properly once the pond is full again.

3 Reestablish the Biological Balance

Beneficial bacteria play a key role in breaking down organic waste and supporting healthy water conditions. Introduce them early in the season to jump-start your pond's nitrogen cycle and prevent algae problems before they start. Use [Cold Water Beneficial Bacteria](#) in the spring when water temperature is below 50°F. Once the water is consistently above 50°F, you can switch to regular [Beneficial Bacteria](#) or [Maintain for Ponds](#).

4 Tend to Plants and Fish

Trim back any dead or decaying plant material that was left over from fall and winter, and [repot waterlilies](#) and hardy pond plants that have outgrown their containers. Be sure to [fertilize](#) your lilies when repotting them as they have very healthy appetites.

When water temperature consistently reaches 50°F, you can begin feeding your fish small, easy-to-digest portions, once per day. Use [cold-water fish food](#) until the water maintains a temperature of 60°F and above. You can increase feeding portions as temperatures rise and activity returns. Once summer is in full swing, you can feed your fish two to three times per day. 🐟





SUMMER: MAINTAIN BALANCE IN WARM WEATHER

Summer is when your pond reaches its peak activity. Fish are lively, plants are flourishing, and your pond becomes the centerpiece of outdoor living. Warm weather can also bring challenges like algae growth, evaporation, and fluctuating oxygen levels, but regular maintenance will keep everything in balance.

1 Keep Water Circulating

Run your pump and filtration system continuously to maintain oxygen and water movement. Remove debris from skimmer basket to decrease buildup and ensure efficient operation.

If you notice fish gasping near the surface of the water, or congregated at the bottom of the waterfall, it may indicate low oxygen levels in the pond. It's easy to increase oxygen in the pond with the addition of a small, [in-pond pump](#), or an [aerator](#).

2 Monitor Water Quality and Levels

Check your pond weekly for water clarity and depth. Top off as needed to replace evaporated water, but refill slowly to avoid sudden temperature changes. Cloudy water can indicate excess nutrients or sunlight exposure. Treat your pond with [Clear for Ponds](#) if this occurs.

3 Manage Algae Naturally

A small number of algae is normal and healthy, but overgrowth can reduce oxygen and become unsightly. Manually remove string algae, trim aquatic plants to improve circulation, and add floating plants to provide shade and compete for nutrients. String algae attached to rocks can be treated with [EcoBlast™ Contact Granular Algaecide](#).

4 Feed Fish Responsibly

Feed fish once or twice daily, giving only what they can consume in a few minutes. Overfeeding contributes to waste buildup and algae blooms. Observe [fish behavior](#) regularly. Healthy fish should be active and alert.



Watch our [video](#) to learn more about algae



5 Care for Plants

Remove yellowing leaves and faded blooms throughout summer to keep water clean and clear. Keep waterlilies and marginals fertilized, and thin out plants that have spread too far. This can happen

with trailing pond plants such as pennywort. Hyacinth and water lettuce can also become crowded and overtake the pond. Removal is easy since these are floating plants. Simply pull the excess from the pond and toss in your compost pile. 🌿



Watch our [video](#) to see how to properly net your pond

FALL: PREPARE FOR WINTER'S REST

As temperatures cool and leaves begin to fall, your pond's activity naturally slows. Fall maintenance focuses on removing debris, trimming plants, and preparing fish and equipment for the months ahead.

1 Keep Leaves Out
Falling leaves can quickly accumulate and decay, releasing unwanted nutrients. Skim them daily or [install netting](#) over the pond to simplify cleanup. Regular maintenance now saves major effort later.

2 Trim and Tidy Plants
Cut back dying or yellowed foliage to prevent decomposition in the pond water. Remove tropical plants before the first frost. Healthy plant management keeps your pond clean and oxygen levels stable.

3 Clean and Inspect Equipment
Empty skimmer baskets frequently during leaf season. Determine if you're going to leave your pond running through winter or plan to shut it down. If you shut it down, remove the pump and filter media from your pond, clean them, and store everything in a warmer place like the garage or basement. Be sure

to drain the plumbing, too—any standing water can freeze, expand, and crack the pipes connected to your filtration system.

4 Transition Fish Feeding
As water temperatures drop below 60°F, switch to an easy-to-digest, cold-water food. Stop feeding entirely once the temperature dips below 50°F, as fish metabolism slows. Feeding them at this point can cause harm to the fish.

5 Do a Final Clean-Up
After most leaves have fallen, remove the netting and do a light debris removal. 🍃

WINTER: PROTECT AND PRESERVE

Winter brings peace and stillness to your pond, but it's still full of life beneath the surface. Fish slow their metabolism, and beneficial bacteria continue working at low temperatures. With a few simple precautions, your pond will remain healthy all season long.



1 Maintain an Opening in the Ice

Keep a small area of the pond surface ice-free to allow gases created from decomposing matter to escape. A [small aerator](#) on a pond shelf or [pond de-icer](#) is ideal for maintaining this opening. Never break the ice manually as the noise and vibrations can stress your fish.

2 Leave the Pond Undisturbed

Fish rest near the bottom where the water stays warmest. Avoid moving rocks, cleaning, or wading into the pond during winter. Minimal disturbance allows fish to conserve energy and remain healthy.



3 Check Equipment Periodically

If you're running an aerator or de-icer, inspect it periodically to ensure it's working properly and not obstructed by ice or snow. Keep cords and connections dry and protected.

4 Avoid Feeding Fish

Once the water is below 50°F, stop feeding your fish entirely. Their slowed metabolism prevents proper digestion, and uneaten food will decay, harming water quality.

5 Appreciate the Quiet Beauty

Winter ponds are uniquely beautiful. Snow-covered rocks, icicles formed by waterfalls, and soft lighting can turn your backyard into a serene winter landscape. Take time to enjoy the quiet stillness, it's an essential part of the pond's life cycle. 🍃

Learn more about
winter pond care
by watching our
[video](#)





LIVING THE AQUASCAPE LIFESTYLE® ALL YEAR LONG

Owning a pond means more than having water in your yard. It's about embracing the rhythm of nature and creating a space that brings beauty, tranquility, and connection in every season.

By understanding your pond's seasonal needs and performing small, consistent maintenance steps, you'll enjoy clearer water, healthier fish, and less work over time.



Each Season Offers Something to Enjoy

The fresh energy of **spring** ~ The vibrant life of **summer**
The quiet preparation of **fall** ~ The reflective calm of **winter**

WATCH US ON YOUTUBE

Aquascape offers four YouTube channels to inspire and educate you on all things water gardening! Each Aquascape video channel serves a specific purpose to help guide water garden enthusiasts on their journey.

[Greg Wittstock, The Pond Guy](#)

I'm Greg Wittstock, The Pond Guy. A passionate pond hobbyist for 35 years, I established Aquascape, Inc. in 1991. Follow along as I meet incredible people, view beautiful water features, and share what it means to be Living the Aquascape Lifestyle®!

[Ed The Pond Professor](#)

Friends refer to me as “The Pond Professor” because I love to talk about the science behind ponds, waterfalls, and the environment. Subscribe to my channel and follow along as I share step-by-step instructions on how and why I build ecosystem ponds and water features the Aquascape way.



TEAM Aquascape

TEAM Aquascape features a first-hand look at Aquascape water feature installations as told by members of the Aquascape Construction team. Join us for informative vlogs that share a behind-the-scenes look at life as pond and waterfall builders in the Chicagoland area.

AquascapePonds

Find out everything you need to know about water gardening, and ecosystem ponds at [aquascapeinc.com](https://www.aquascapeinc.com). We're the leading water garden features manufacturer and resource in North America.

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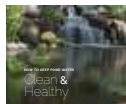
[Aquascape Lifestyles](#)

Our free bi-annual digital magazine contains stunning photography and informative articles about water features that you won't find anywhere else.



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Sign up for Pondsides, our free e-newsletter that's filled with great information and tips to help you along your water gardening journey.



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Enjoy our current free offering of electronic books like this one, on a variety of water gardening topics.



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