

Puddleplants

Telephone: 01558 615056

sonia@puddleplants.co.uk

The Barn
Cwmceiliog Fawr
Taliaris
Llandeilo
SA19 7NL

Lifepond Planting Instructions

General

Ideally the Lifepond should not be placed where it gets full sun all day long, as small bodies of water can get very hot, so if possible try and site where it will get some shade for part of the day. Make sure it is positioned on a solid level base. Rainwater is preferred if you can, otherwise tap water is acceptable, however it may make the pond more susceptible to algae and blanketweed.

Algae and blanketweed are a perennial problem in any pond, especially in the warmer months in Spring and early Summer. Small ponds are particularly prone to it as the water body is small and it warms up very quickly. It may be worth investing in some Extract of Barley Straw as a preventative measure -a little goes a long way!

Do not overfill your Lifepond -the water level should reach the channel to the bog area so this remains damp at all times, but you don't want it filled too high so the bog plants are under water. Keep an eye on water level as it may have to be topped up regularly during the warmer months to maintain the moisture levels of the bog area, or reduced during the winter months to make sure the bog plants aren't permanently under water which could cause one or two to suffer.

When topping up rainwater is preferred, and when taking water out be carefully not to discard any wildlife!

All plants supplied are British native plants and wildlife friendly and fully hardy, however during particularly cold periods where there is a danger of severe frosts you may want to consider protecting the pond with a little insulation such as bubble wrap or fleece. This will help to prevent the water from freezing over and keep the pond accessible to wildlife. If it does freeze over trying melting with a little hot water -preferably don't break the ice as this will shock the little pond creatures.

Planting

Whilst we supply washed gravel its worth giving it a quick wash, much like you would wash the starch out of rice, to remove traces of dust before using, otherwise this will make the water cloudier.

Make sure you fill the marsh area with soil almost to the top, wet the soil, remove the plants from their pots, scoop out a little soil for each one and put them in and firm the soil around them, then cover with a good layer of aquatic gravel. This will prevent too much soil clouding the water in your pond. Don't worry if the pond is initially a bit murky as it will soon clear as any sediment sinks to the bottom.

The final level of the marsh area should be level with the top of the Lifepond. Plant the baskets in the same way. 3 plants can go in the 2 litre basket -best to use the Hard rush, Flowering rush, Fibre optic plant and cotton grass (depending which are included in your collection) as these are all taller plants which will be more stable in this basket. The Marsh marigold can go in the 1 litre basket. If it gets blown over it can be weighted down with a stone. Plant the bog plants in the marsh area -this will be a selection of 5 from Ragged robin, Forget-me-not, Water avens, Creeping jenny, Pennyroyal, Devil's bit scabious, Cuckoo flower.

Fill the Lifepond with water (ideally rainwater) just high enough for water to get through the little channel between the shallow area and the marsh area. Don't overfill as you don't want standing water in the marsh area. Gently lower the baskets into the deep area.

The oxygenator, which will either be Hornwort or Willow moss can just be put loose in the deep water area to float around.

If you want you can add some pebbles and stones to the shallow area to make it easier for wildlife to get in and out and they make an attractive addition to your Lifepond.

Plant maintenance

Cut back any flower spikes from the Ragged robin once the flowers are over as this will encourage the plant to send up more flowers and stop it setting seed. Do the same with the Marsh marigold, which then means you may get a second flush of flowers in August after their main flowering time in March/April. Similarly dead head any of the other flowers and remove old yellowing leaves. The Creeping jenny and Forget-me-not are creeping, low growing, plants so don't worry that they are not upright and don't be tempted to try and prop them up or stake them. They will naturally spread in all directions and raft across the water, with the Forget-me-not sending roots down into the water. If they get a bit straggly trim then back and they will send out new shoots and thicken up. In the Autumn tidy up any dead leaves that have fallen into the water. Leave the grasses/rush uprights over winter to provide habitat for wildlife, but in early spring just before the new stems start to grow cut right back. If you have a Flowering rush this will die back and return in the spring as it is a bulb. If you have a Fibre optic plant this is evergreen and all you will need to do is occasionally tidy up any old dead stems.

Please bear in mind that the Lifepond is a small growing area so over time the plants will grow and become over-crowded, much like any plant becomes pot-bound. In addition to the on-going maintenance, every few years you will need to lift and divide the plants to thin them out and renew the soil to ensure they continue to flourish.

Now sit back and wait for your pond to be discovered and enjoyed by all your local wildlife!