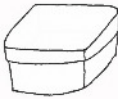





How to build a mini wildlife pond



You will need:

- a watertight container* 
- old bricks, rocks and pebbles 
- pond plants 
- spade 

* Is there anything that you can upcycle? It could be an old washing-up bowl, sink or even a plant pot. Aim for 20-30cm deep.

- 1 Choose a spot. Your pond will need light, but not full sunlight all day. You can dig a hole and sink your container, or just have it sitting on top.
- 2 If the container isn't watertight, e.g. an old plant pot, then add a piece of pond liner.
- 3 Add a layer of gravel and rocks.
- 4 Fill your pond with rainwater (tap water contains chemicals).
- 5 Start planting... you only need two or three plants.
- 6 Now watch and wait! Wildlife will come to your pond of its own accord.

One vertical growing plant that reaches out of the water e.g. flowering rush

Use logs or stones to create a range of depths and a slope for creatures to climb in and out

One submerged plant e.g. hornwort or spiked water milfoil

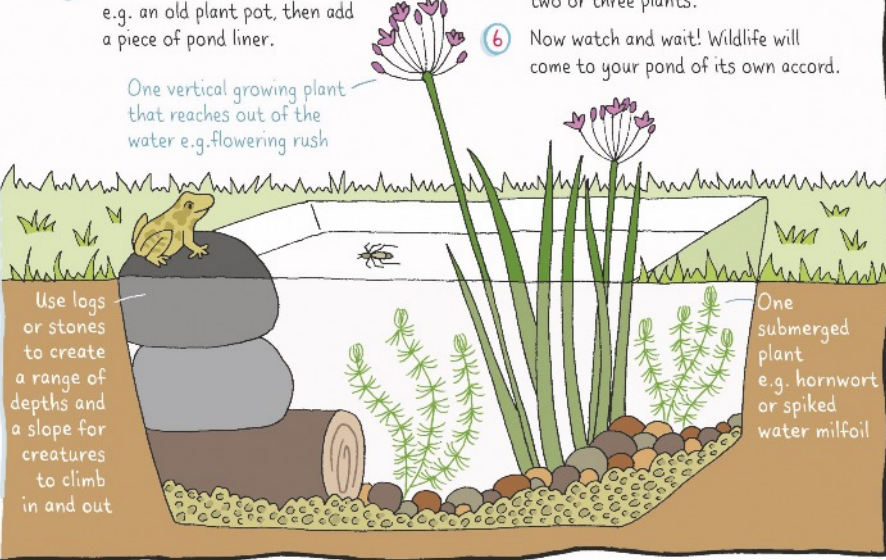


Illustration: Corinne Welch © Copyright Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts 2018 and Royal Horticultural Society 2019

www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk

Don't introduce frogs, fish or even water from another pond as this can spread disease.

Download at www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Page%205%20MINI-WILDLIFE-POND-2019.jpg

THINGS TO DO IN FEBRUARY

- Look out for buds on trees and blackthorn blossom
- Look out for frog spawn
- Learn about amphibian life cycles and metamorphosis
- Build a mini wildlife pond
- Collect some twigs and use a twig key to identify them
- Build a nest box

RESOURCES

1. Amphibian spotter sheet https://www.treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activities/pdfs/pdf_amphibian_spotter_sheet.pdf
2. Make a frog life cycle dial https://www.treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activities/pdfs/pdf_frog_life_cycle_idial.pdf
3. Make a mini pond <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Page%205%20MINI-WILDLIFE-POND-2019.jpg>
4. Build a nest box https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/NEST-BOX_0.jpg

5. Learn how to use a key to identify twigs.

A Twig Key

This works for all the trees illustrated in ①. The key can be simplified by deleting some species. It can be used in the wood, or with twigs brought back to the classroom.

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| 1) | Buds opposite |  | go to 2 |
| | Buds alternate |  | go to 6 |
| 2) | Buds sticky |  | HORSE CHESTNUT |
| | Buds not sticky | | go to 3 |
| 3) | Buds black |  | ASH |
| | Buds not black | | go to 4 |
| 4) | Twig with large white pith |  | ELDER |
| | Twig without large white pith |  | go to 5 |
| 5) | Buds fat and green | | SYCAMORE |
| | Buds small, flattened, not green | | FIELD MAPLE |
| 6) | Twig with thorns |  | go to 7 |
| | Twig without thorns |  | go to 8 |
| 7) | Twig reddish brown | | HAWTHORN |
| | Twig greyish black | | BLACKTHORN |
| 8) | Twig hairy |  | go to 9 |
| | Twig not hairy |  | go to 10 |
| 9) | Buds greenish | | HAZEL |
| | Buds dark brown | | ELM |
| 10) | Buds thin and pointed |  | go to 11 |
| | Buds not thin and pointed |  | go to 12 |
| 11) | Buds sticking out from twig |  | BEECH |
| | Buds lying along twig |  | HORNBEAM |
| 12) | Twig zig-zagged |  | LIME |
| | Not zig-zagged, but with ridges |  | SWEET CHESTNUT |
| | Neither of above, with one bud at end |  | WILLOW |
| | None of above, several buds at end |  | OAK |

This can readily be written as a booklet, with page numbers instead of line numbers. The illustrations in ① can be stuck next to tree names. The key format also lends itself to being written as a computer program. The children can attempt to write their own key for twigs they collect.