



8 Easy Steps to Close Your Pond

We've decided to shut down the pond this winter. Do we just need to take out the pump and filter?

By taking the right steps to safely and easily close your pond, you can save time, effort and money on pond maintenance, improve the survival rates of plants and fish and be ready to enjoy your pond more quickly in spring. While every pond's needs vary, the basic steps to close your pond include...

1. Slow Feeding When Temperatures Drop

As the autumn temperatures drop, fish feeding should also slow down. Gradually change to fish food with less protein, and decrease feeding frequencies as fish activity slows. When water temperatures are below 50 degrees, the fish will begin to hibernate and all feeding should stop.

2. Trim and Move Aquatic Plants

While delicate pond plants should be considered annuals and will not survive the winter, hardy varieties can be overwintered in deep water. Before moving them to the deepest part of the pond, trim dead or damaged foliage to minimize decay that will contaminate the water.

3. Clean the Pond Thoroughly

Remove excess debris and sludge, trimming adjacent landscaping and make any necessary repairs. This will help keep your fish and plants healthy through the winter and make it easier for the pond to regenerate in spring.

4. Clear Away Leaves

Skim leaves off the pond regularly, or install a net at least 15-18 inches above the water to catch leaves. When leaves fall into the water, they gradually decay and ammonia and phosphate levels will rise; this can be toxic and even fatal to fish.

5. Shut Off Moving Water and Pumps

As fish slow down in fall, it is time to shut off any waterfalls, fountains or bubblers and remove the pond's pump to store it for winter. The warmest water will be at the bottom of the pond where fish are hibernating, and continuing to move the water in winter would cool the pond and endanger its fish and plants.

6. Remove, Clean and Store Filters

When water is no longer moving in the pond, filters no longer need to be used. Remove them and be sure they are thoroughly cleaned. Make any repairs or plan for replacement or upgraded filters as necessary so they can be reinstalled in spring.

7. Use an Aerator:

Using an aerator will facilitate the release of gasses. An aerator pumps air into an air stone which releases tiny bubbles of oxygen into the water. This prevents the water from freezing and also adds oxygen to the water when waterfalls aren't running. A de-icer can also be used but note it does not add oxygen and it uses a lot more electricity.

8. Store Equipment Properly

After the pond is prepared for winter, store pumps, filters, cleaning gear and other pond equipment properly to keep it in good condition through the winter.

By taking the proper steps to close your pond in fall, your fish and plants will be safer, your pond will be in better condition and you will be able to restart the pond easier in spring for even more enjoyment.