
WINTERIZING YOUR POND IN THE FALL

Step 1. Hang the tube of the pond pump over the edge of your pond and begin pumping water out onto the ground. At Aquatic & Garden Decor, we carry a utility pump to which you can attach a garden hose which works very well for this step. Drain your pond down to just below the shelf (approximately half the depth of your pond). This allows for easier access to plants, especially lilies and oxygenators on the bottom of the pond.

Step 2. Remove the oxygenating plants from the bottom of the pond. Lay these plants in your yard and rinse with fresh water to clean them up. Then, store them in a bucket of clean water until plants are ready to be returned to the pond.

Step 3. Remove all potted plants, including water lilies, from the pond. Clean the pots by trimming the roots that have grown out of the pots, and pull away all debris that has collected around each pot. Please refer to our 'Aquatic Plant Care' tip sheet for winterizing instructions for specific plants.

Step 4. When the water has drained to just below the shelf (approximately 1/2 the depth), turn off the drain pump and remove it from the pond. Remove any loose debris, leaves, sludge, etc. from pond shelves and hose down the sides and shelves of the pond. Do not scrub and scour.

Step 5. Using a pond net, slowly drag it across the bottom of the pond to remove as much thick debris, leaves and sludge as possible. If you move the net slowly enough, your fish will naturally swim away from it. If you accidentally catch one, simply pull it out of the net and place it back in the pond.

Step 6. After the pond is cleaned, place cleaned and winterized plants in the correct location per our 'Aquatic Plant Care' tip sheet. Trim all of the nicest, greenest oxygenators (discarding the rest) and bunch all of the stems together. Place them on the bottom of the pond tied to a rock or weights.

Step 7. Now begin refilling the pond with fresh water, and while your pond is filling, clean your water pump. Larger waterfall pumps, that are deeper in the pond where the water will not freeze, can remain in the pond for winter. Smaller pumps located on shelves or in shallow water should be removed and stored inside for the winter in a container of water. (The water prevents the seals from drying out.) Please remember: We do not recommend running your pump in the winter. Running a pump in the pond to keep a hole in the ice will only make the pond water colder and encourage a thicker layer of ice on the pond. Also, as the perimeter of the pond and/or waterfall freezes, the ice can divert the moving water in the center out of the pond, thus draining it! Pumps should remain off during the winter months.

Step 8. As you continue filling the pond, if you have fish, you must use a de-chlorinator to remove all chlorine and chloramine from the water. The de-chlorinator available at Aquatic & Garden Decor is safe for aquatic plants. Always read and follow the directions on the package.

Step 9. Use a pond de-icer to maintain an open hole in the pond's surface. This will allow toxic gases to escape. The pond de-icers float on the water surface and are thermostatically controlled. Please be advised, however, that a de-icer is not a substitute for properly cleaning and winterizing the pond in the fall.

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Step 10. In order to keep falling leaves and other debris out of your pond during the winter, place a piece of netting or a screen over the pond. Stretch it tightly and anchor the edges with rocks, bricks, etc. It is also a good idea to place a few pieces of wood, rigid PVC pipe, etc. across the pond, under the netting, to prevent the netting from sagging into the pond.

Your pond is now ready for the winter.

All products and accessories discussed in this tip sheet are available at Aquatic & Garden Decor.