Why have a pond in my garden?

It is estimated that half a million ponds have been lost over the last 100 years in the UK and one in five remaining ponds are thought to be in poor condition.

Initiatives are underway to try and restore lost ponds and create new ones that are not contaminated by alien plants or run-off.

This is where you come in!

A pond can increase the biodiversity in your garden, bringing in a totally different set of species. The increase in insects for example, could attract some of the bats we have in our area.

It provides a breeding space for a host of creatures, including frogs, toads, newts and dragonflies, which are all disappearing fast from our countryside.

A shallow end provides a bathing space for birds and a drinking space for many mammals and insects

Get together with your neighbours! A series of ponds in one area provides a corridor for amphibians to move about, increasing their chances of breeding, survival and a healthy life. (That hedgehog hole in the fence you have been meaning to cut could have many uses for wildlife!)

A body of water, however small, provides a pleasant space in which to relax, a point of interest and a place to encourage well-being.

In hot weather, a body of water can lower the surrounding air temperatures.

With generous support from -

East Suffolk Community Partnerships | Melton Woodbridge & Deben Peninsula

EASTSUFFOLK COUNCIL

-and kind permission from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Transition Woodbridge

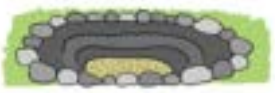
from oil dependence to local resilience

.....and to make a bigger pond ...

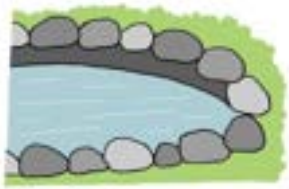
Step1
It is better for wildlife if you put the pond in a warm, sunny area – tadpoles, dragonflies and plants will thrive in these conditions. First, mark out your pond on the ground with a rope or hosepipe, and then get digging! Ensure that the sides are level as you dig by placing a plank across the pond's hole with a spirit level on top. Remember to include some shallow areas - a sloping 'beach' is ideal, to allow wildlife easy access

Step 2
Remove any sharp stones from the bottom of the hole. Put down a 5 cm-thick layer of sand to line the hole. Sand is preferable because it is sterile and will not harbour any undesirable seeds or microbes, but you can also try old carpet, newspapers or even loft insulation material. Remember to save some sand for step 4.

Step 3
Dig a trench around the edge of the pond for the overhanging pond liner to drop into. Place the liner carefully in the hole and tuck the edge into the trench; weigh it down with large rocks. Any extra excess liner can be snipped off with scissors.



Step 4
Fill the bottom of the pond with the remaining sand.



Step 5
Fill the pond up, this may take longer than you think. If possible, use collected rainwater to fill your pond, or fill from the tap with a hose. To stop the sand substrate dispersing, rest the nozzle of the hose on a plastic bag to absorb some of the energy. If you do fill your pond with tap water then leave it so stand for a few days before adding it in.

As the pond fills up, the liner will stretch. Back fill the trench around the edge of the pond with soil. As the pond is filling, place turf, soil or flagstones over the exposed liner at the pond edges. Butyl liner degrades in sunlight, so try not to leave areas of uncovered liner exposed for too long.

Step 6
Plants can be introduced to your pond approximately 1-2 weeks after the initial filling with water. Carefully selected native species (see board 3) will support your local wildlife.

Step 7
Watch and see what wildlife visits. Place stones, logs and plants around the edges to create habitats for pond-visiting creatures. Consider adding a plank of wood or a similar ramp to help any wildlife that might fall in. By including a gently sloping beach area when digging your pond, you can ensure wildlife have an easy way out.

Go to the QR code or link on our last board to find a copy of this info.

What should I plant?

Some purists think you should wait to see what occurs naturally in your new pond but if you are keen to get things going, here is some advice. Avoid inadvertently introducing alien, invasive species which out-compete our native pond plants and pose a threat to our native invertebrates, amphibians and fish by blocking out heat and light from the water.

Non-exhaustive list of native pond plants found in Suffolk

Oxygenators

Usually submerged plants. Some native species can be fussy especially if pond water quality is poor, but these are some of the most tolerant.

Rigid hornwort
(can be very invasive)

Curled pondweed
(good for newts in steep-edged ponds)

Water starwort

Spiked water-milfoil
(can be invasive)

Water crowfoot

Floating plants

Plants whose leaves float on the surface. Some of the plants are rooted, but others float freely. The leaves provide shade for the water below, reducing the build-up of algae. They can also act as platforms for viewing, courting or mating for a variety of insects.

Broad-leaved pondweed

Water soldier
(very invasive)

Water crowfoot

Frogbit

Amphibious bistort

Emergent plants

Plants with erect stems and leaves, which emerge above the water's surface. These are important for dragonfly nymphs to crawl up, before they become flying adults.

Yellow flag

Bogbean

Branched bur-reed

Flowering rush

Marginal plants

Plants that need to grow at the shallow edges of the pond. Some need to be permanently in a few centimetres of water. Others will tolerate periodic drying out.

Water speedwell

Water-forget-me-not
(good for crested newts)

Water mint
(good for crested newts)

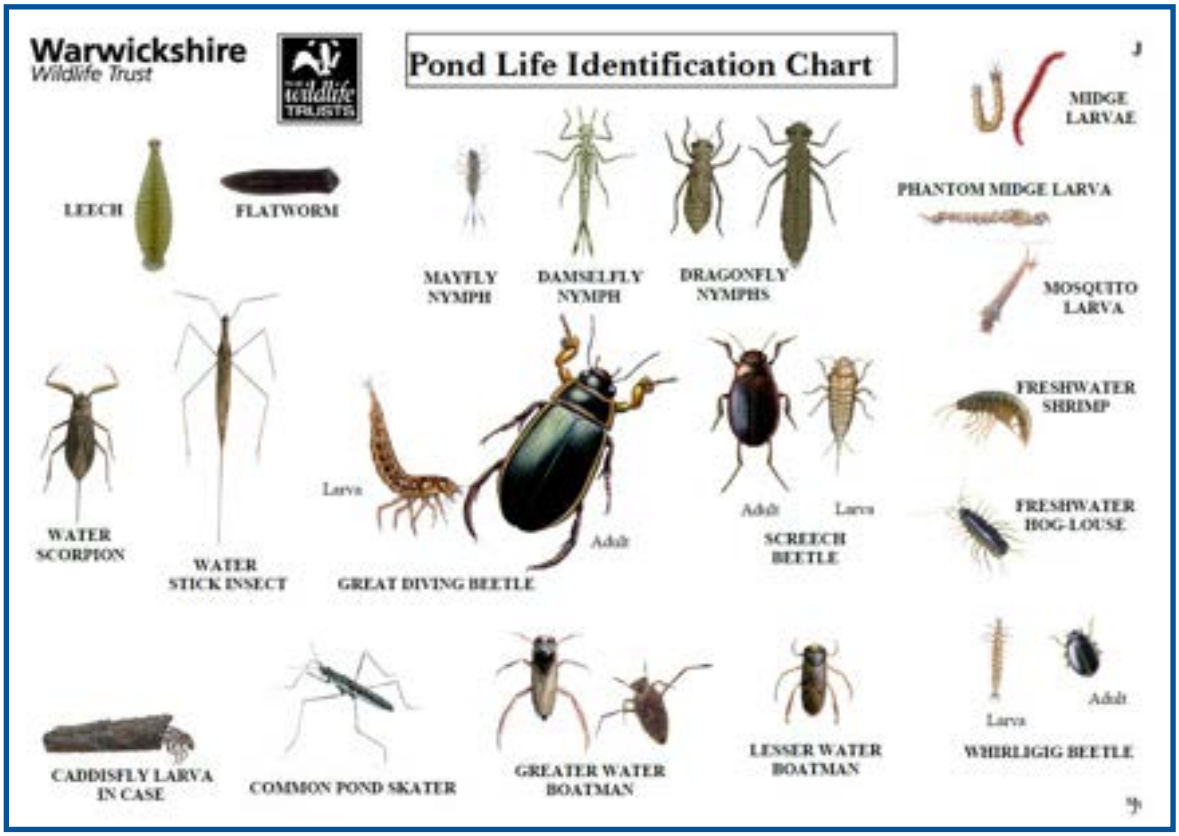
Water plantain

Brooklime

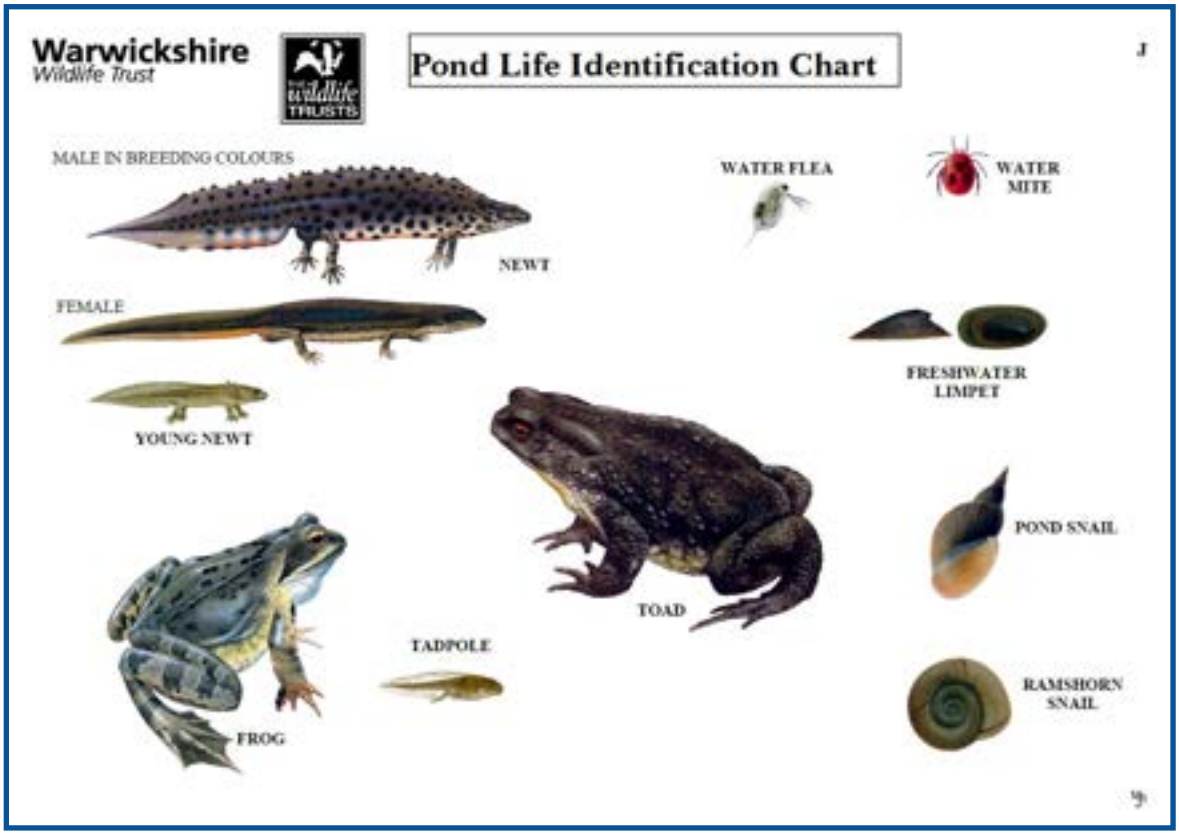
Lesser spearwort

Marsh marigold (Not on clay)

What creatures will I find in my pond?



With a simple internet search you will find a host of downloadable charts like these from the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to help you identify the fauna arriving at your pond. You will enjoy hours being fascinated by the activities of its inhabitants and visitors. Watch out for larger mammals coming to drink and birds bathing in the shallow end. Snakes and bats will arrive to hunt too! Don't put fish into a wildlife pond—they will eat everything!



With thanks to Warwickshire Wildlife Trust for their fabulous free, downloadable materials

How do I maintain my pond?

Manage surrounding plants to reduce overshadowing and leaf litter accumulation.

In Autumn, thin out over vigorous aquatic vegetation. Do not be tempted to pass these onto a friend, as this is a sure way of spreading diseases.

Leave any pruned, raked or dredged materials on the side of the pond for a few hours to allow trapped creatures to return to the water. (Then put them on the compost heap!)

Aim to leave 25% plant cover in your pond. Correct light and heat levels will help to keep your pond balanced.

In late Summer, before creatures begin to hibernate in the bottom, dredge out leaf litter to limit levels of nutrients. This will discourage algal and duckweed growth

Check access points for wildlife. Can creatures still enter and exit safely, or reach the water to drink??

If water levels drop dramatically, check the liner for leaks. There are ways of mending leaks, search the internet!

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You can find a copy of our information on ponds by using this QR code, or going to our website >>

www.transitionwoodbridge.org.uk/ponds