

# For a golden pond

## ...you need to do a little maintenance

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Observing the change of seasons playing out around a managed pond is one of the nicest experiences in gardening. Water in the garden can be calming but it can also be lively and refreshing. Its reflective properties, especially in the autumn and winter, are often visually stunning.

Unfortunately, these vibrant images are soon impaired by falling leaves which settle on the water surface before sinking to the pond floor, potentially impacting water quality. High nutrient entry in the form of organic matter allows algae to thrive resulting in high levels of sediment and the need for extra maintenance.

For a functioning, sustainable water feature, whether it's a pond, rill, fountain, water wall/blade or even a pondless water feature, a little TLC is required at this time of year.

There are many kinds of gadgets on the market, such as pond vacuums, which can target every nook and cranny of a pond but a little planning and elbow grease goes a long way towards smooth water flow.

### Preventing entry

Removing plant debris before it enters, or upon entering, a water feature is essential. Decomposing leaves and other organic matter infuse the feature's water with nutrients, depleting oxygen levels. They can also restrict water flow to, and from, a pond pump and filters, causing problems such as inadequate pressure, reduced flow rates, higher running costs and even burnout due to the pump running dry.

Installing pond netting at, or just above, the water surface can go a long way to preventing pump and filter malfunctions, while maintaining water quality. A pond pliers is a useful garden tool to have in your garden shed as twigs/sticks and other larger debris may be too awkward for netting.

Floating, mechanical surface skimmers or edge skimmers, which remove plant remnants before they sink to the bottom of the reservoir, can also be installed with little fuss



and without impairing the aesthetic value of the water feature.

### Pumps

A good pump can be the heartbeat of a healthy pond and they are usually designed for a specific purpose. It's very important to keep moving parts of a pump clean, as lack of cleaning can lead to blocked inlets.

Always make sure the pump is unplugged when handling, while checking to see that the rotor is able to move freely. Pump shields (porous netting) can be installed around nearly all kinds of submersible pumps. These mesh materials prevent flora, newts and other wildlife getting caught in the pump.

When re-submersing the pump, ensure it's located away from the deepest part of the reservoir where sediments will naturally accumulate. Regular maintenance is key to maintaining water quality. A little maintenance undertaken at this time of year will be rewarded with a well-functioning water feature during the coming year.

**Autumn and early winter is a dangerous time for water pumps, plant material falling into your water feature or organic matter growing in the water can clog up the moving parts. A little maintenance now will ensure your pump keeps functioning to its optimum.**