

HOP TO IT!

Garden ponds are an invaluable wildlife resource; they support a greater number of animal species than any other type of habitat.

If you think you don't have space for a garden pond then think again! You may be surprised to know that you can create a mini pond from old materials that could even fit on a balcony!

What you need to do:

- 1 Choose a container that will fit in your chosen outdoor space. Repurposed items work well, such as an old washing-up bowl, dustbin lid, shallow bucket, sink (with the plug silicon-sealed in place) or a large plant pot lined with a pond liner.
- 2 Begin your task with the container in the place where you want it to be permanently located. If you are able to dig a hole, your container can sit flush with the ground.
- 3 Fill the bottom of the container with sand and stones (from the garden centre or your own garden, not the beach.)
- 4 Ask at the garden centre for local aquatic plants (such as Water Mint or Flag Iris) which will help to oxygenate the water. Use a layer of aquatic compost (not regular garden compost) followed by the plants (keep them in the mesh baskets they were supplied in) then top with fine gravel. Two or three plants is sufficient for a small container pond.
- 5 Fill the container with rainwater (or tap water that has been left outside for a few days for chemicals to evaporate.)
- 6 Ensure that wildlife have safe access by ensuring there is a way in and out of the pond. Make stepping stones from stones or logs both inside and outside the pond.
- 7 Now sit back and watch for wildlife enjoying their new home. Look out for toads and newts, dragonflies and damselflies as well as birds and hedgehogs visiting for a drink.

