



Information Sheet
“Fall/Winter Checklist”

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Fall/Winter Pond Checklist

The water in the pond should be in as good a condition as possible to insure the survival of the fish during the winter! Water quality is absolutely first priority, when winterizing your pond.

Remove as much organic waste from the bottom of the pond as possible using a net and/or vacuum. You will be happy with an investment of a good, strong, telescopic net.

Check the pH and Nitrite levels. These are always very important, but even more so during the colder months when the health of the fish can deteriorate rapidly. Medicines do not work as well in colder water, so it is important to keep the fish at optimum health to prevent problems.

Change 20-30% of the pond water if necessary. Always add appropriate water treatments (de-chlorinator) following any water change.

Cover the pond with a net to prevent leaves from being blown in and predators from reaching your fish now that the plants are dying down and they have less opportunity to hide. If possible, support the pond netting using PVC pipe, to keep the net above water level. Use a leaf blower to blow the leaves off your pond netting and then dispose of them accordingly.

In those areas (higher elevations) where the pond water temperature will drop dramatically, pump(s) can be shut down one week after the last feeding of the fish. The pump(s) should be removed from the pond and thoroughly cleaned. Oil filled pumps need to be stored in a bucket of pond or distilled water to prevent the seals and gaskets from drying out. Magnetic and epoxy sealed pumps can be stored dry.

Out of pond filters (pressurized, bead, sand, etc.) should be thoroughly cleaned, inspected for damage (especially the UV light) and stored inside (basement or garage) to prevent freezing and cracking. Biofall filters that aren't being used in the winter need to be cleaned as well. Take out and clean all the filter media (mats, bioballs, springflo, etc.) and store in a cool dry place.

_____ This is a good time to thin out the fish population. Ponds are low in oxygen during the winter if ice forms and the problem compounds if there are too many fish.

_____ If the pump is disconnected some provisions need to be made to allow carbon monoxide to escape from the water and oxygen to enter. The pond must not be allowed to freeze completely over for any length of time or fish death will occur! A floating de-icer or heater is perfect for this job, since it kicks on when the pond starts freezing over and keeps a hole open at all times. De-icer's or heaters are a great investment, especially if you plan on taking a winter vacation.

_____ Prune hardy perennials and move into deep enough water to protect the crowns from freezing. Most pond plants are considered to be perennials in this zone. The chances of them coming back are relatively good, as long as the root ball of the plant doesn't freeze.

_____ Remember that the digestive system of the fish slows down as the water cools. Switch to an easily digestible diet and reduce feeding (wheat germ).