

**DISCLAIMER: These are ideas and thoughts I ran across while researching before I rebuilt my pond. I take to credit for any of these thoughts, nor any of the responsibility. Maybe something here is what you are looking for or can help in some way.**

### **MAINTENANCE**

■ Once every week or 2, I run a pool net over 1/3 to 1/2 of my pond bottom, scooping up the muck there. That's a pool net, the deep kind, not a leaf skimmer. I also stir up the rest of the muck on the pond bottom to be sucked up by the pump to be eliminated by the filters. I also make sure any dead pond plant leaves and spent blooms are cut off at least once a month to keep them from ending up on the pond bottom. The other way to control the nutrients is to have other plants in the pond that will also use the nutrients. The plants that do this best are the oxygenating plants and grasses. These plants don't put out much of a root system so they take up most of their nutrients directly from the water through their leaves. "Planting" for these things is really anchoring them to the bottom of the pond. I just tie a small rock to a bunch and drop it in the pond. You can stick them under a brick or another plant pot. For a good balance in your pond, you need at least 1 bunch of these plants for every 2 square feet of surface area.

■ Once every three to four weeks during the pond season, you should make a 15% to 25% water change. The water can accumulate a large amount of dissolved organics and natural acidifiers that reduce water quality and disrupt the pond's natural balance. Performing a water change will reduce the build-up of these pollutants and various others. Remember, always treat your tap water with Chlorine Neutralizer whenever adding water to your pond. You will also need to replace electrolytes such as potassium, sodium, magnesium, sulfate, calcium and chloride, to maintain proper fish health. Pond Salt provides all the essential electrolytes fish need to survive.

### **Weekly Tasks**

- \* Check the water level--if it has dropped due to evaporation, top it off. Add a dechlorinator if you add more than 10% of the total volume of water. If it has not dropped, pump about 5% of the water into the surrounding garden and top off the pond. The water is great fertilizer and the water changing deters chemical buildup that can corrode the pump.
- \* Check the bottom of the pond for decaying vegetation and remove dead plants, leaves or other vegetation. Dead and decaying plant material can foul the water and kill the fish.

### **Monthly Tasks**

- \* Fertilize your water lilies with a product made for aquatic plants. Follow the manufacturer's directions for application. Fertilize the lilies from the time the leaves reach the surface in the spring until the lilies go dormant --usually about the first of November.
- \* If you have a filter with your pump, clean it every month. During the hot part of the summer and if your pond is in full sun, clean it more often. If the filter has a foam rubber component, run water through it until the water runs clear. Do not squeeze or wring it out.

### **Yearly Tasks**

\* Remove all of the fish, plants and pump out the water. Lightly scrub the bottom and sides of the pond with a brush--do not use chemicals or soap. Add new water, dechlorinate, replace fish, divide plants, repot and replace. Save some of the old water to store the fish in while the pond is being cleaned. Put the fish in plastic bags in the old water. Float the fish on top of the newly cleaned pond until the water in the bag and the water in the pond are the same temperature. Late February is a great time to do the yearly cleaning. Make sure the temperature of the water is above 55 degrees.

### **SPRING**

■ I feed medicated food for the first few weeks of the first feeding in spring. After the pond is cleaned & restarted I also salt. This year I am going to use the Lymnozyme to further fight any aeromonas. I haven't had any problems with these methods.

■ Do not feed them until the water reaches 40° F or above for a week straight. They are unable to digest food if they are fed then forced into hibernation by sudden cold spells. Feed your fish easily digestible wheat germ rich foods (low protein). Feed at midday when fish activity is at its most.

■ Clean back dead plants and foliage. It is advisable to carry out a partial water change add Aquasafe or Chloramine to reduce Chlorine, ammonia & heavy metals.

### **Early Summer**

\*Net out or pull out thread algae which flourish this time of year.

\*Fertilize your plants monthly and divide any plants which may be overgrowing their containers.

\*Fish will be feeding more now and can be given higher protein food

\*Bio-filters are under great stress at this time Bio-organisms are unable to reproduce enough to cope with increased fish waste and increased algae growth

\*Clean pre filters regularly to prevent clogging.

### **Mid to Late Summer**

\*Monthly maintenance of bio-filter, flushing and clean intake of pumps for clogs. You will notice significant reduction in flow if you have a serious clog. \*This will reduce the life and efficiency of your pump if not cleaned occasionally. Small filters in ponds must be rinsed 2 to 3 times per week.

\*You can still introduce or divide plants.

### **FALL AND WINTER**

\*Tidy up pond, trim back dying plants. Trim back oxygenating plants and replant. Early autumn is the last possible time to consider a complete pond clean out. Otherwise, change 20% of the water to refresh the pond. remove as much waste from the bottom of pond as possible.

\*Give filters a good cleaning before winter sets in

\*Do not move fish or introduce new ones when temperatures reach 10°C/ 50°F.

\*Fish enter a state of semi-hibernation at temperatures below 40°F. Refrain from feeding fish until the spring.