



School Gardening
Resources

PRIMARY LEVEL

BORD BIA
IRISH FOOD BOARD

Making a Wildlife Pond





Time of Year

| All year round.

Resources Needed

| Shovels, liner (i.e. UV protected plastic e.g. silage plastic or butyl rubber pond liner or use an old sink or bath tub), measuring tape, pond plants, water (hosepipe or buckets), gloves, camera to record project.

Cross Curriculum Relevance

| **SESE:** Living Things, Environmental Awareness and Care, Exploring

Languages: New Words/Spelling

Art: Making signs/drawing

Healthy Eating/Food Dude: How a pond helps an organic garden

Green Schools Project: Water Conservation



1 How do we start?

- ★ Assess where the best place to put the pond is - ideally in the lowest area of the grounds and in view of teachers.
- ★ Use hosepipe or string to mark the outline of the pond.
- ★ Dig a stepped hole with 150-200mm between each step with a minimum depth of 450mm (to avoid overheating in summer and freezing in winter).
- ★ Run a measuring tape through the contours and add 1 metre to calculate size of liner needed.
- ★ Line the hole with carpet/cardboard/sand to prevent puncturing liner.
- ★ Stretch liner flat across the pond, weight down with rocks around the edge then fill with water and allow the water to stretch the plastic into the shape of the pond.
- ★ Cover the edge of the liner with rocks/sods/turf but ensure easy access for wildlife.
- ★ Add native pond plants.
- ★ Tadpoles can be added in the spring (fish will eat tadpoles so keep separate!).



2 Examples of native pond plants

Water lilies, oar weed, star weed, bladderworts, rushes, sphagnum mosses, marsh marigolds, horsetail, reeds, bulrushes, water mint.

Larger plants may be kept in pots to restrict growth. Pond plants can be easily harvested from local naturalized ponds (do not take plants from the wild). Make sure you leave some behind to keep growing!



Health and Safety

- ★ Always use tools safely.
- ★ Wash hands after garden session.
- ★ Ensure the pond is placed in view of teachers.
- ★ Please refer to the worksheet on Health & Safety for detailed information.





3 Ideas for research projects

SESE - Investigate life cycles in the pond, e.g. frogs, dragonflies, newts or fish (great for spring).

Geography - Investigate watering techniques in other countries, especially irrigation.

Local Heritage - Explore the links between the pond and the kitchen tap. How essential clean water is to our health.

Water conservation - was it always like this?

Art/Communications - Make a model/diagram/picture of the different layers in the pond including plants and animals.

How do we look after it?

- ★ Check regularly to see what is growing in the pond.
- ★ Pond dip to check what wildlife lives in the pond.
- ★ Try to use native plants wherever possible as non-native plants can create pollution in local lakes and rivers.
- ★ De-weed the pond if it looks clogged up - minimum of 1/3 of the surface should be clear.
- ★ During the first year, there may be green algae growing. This should naturally go but if it doesn't, add a bag of straw to absorb the extra nutrients.



For more information

The internet/the library

ENFO - very informative

leaflets on making ponds

Irish Peatland Conservation Council

(www.ipcc.ie)