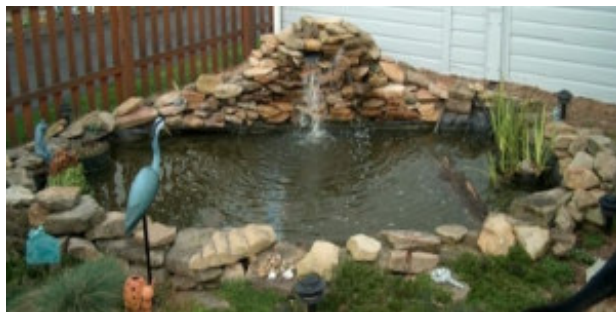


How To Build A Beautiful Backyard Pond And Have Fun Doing It



by Robert A. Dorrance Sr.
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Forward:

I must tell you, building a pond is a great experience that you will love for years and years, and since it is a creative endeavor, you really can put your own signature on it. This e-book will give you the steps to take as you plan, and many pointers along the way. Use your imagination and try different things to make it just the way you want it and you'll end up with a project you'll be proud of and a wonderful pond to boot!

For the first three years of it's existence, my wife and I changed and redid areas around the pond many times trying for that certain final "LOOK". Once you're there, you'll find you're probably not, and that is one of the joys of the pond experience. It's sort of like a work of art that is never quite finished.

If you're a nature lover, and you most likely are if you're considering a pond, then this is where what I call the "pond bonus" comes in. Water plants in the pond itself, perennials and annual flowers around the perimeter, butterflies, Hummingbirds, frogs, and spring peepers make the whole pond area a nature wonderland!

On a personal note, since this is my initial venture into writing, I would ask you to bear with me. I'll try my best to keep instructions and suggestions practical and leave out a lot of side comments and quips that won't add anything to your pond building experience. I'll tell you the way I've done it, the things that have worked and those that haven't and hopefully by the end of this e-book you will find, as I did, that overall it was more fun than work.

Finally, I hope you enjoy the book, and that when your project is finished, you'll send me some pictures and comments on your experience. If we're able to gain enough interest and receive enough feedback, then I would hope in the future I'll be able to put out a second edition of "How to Build a Beautiful Backyard Pond" featuring pictures and stories of your experiences.

Thank You, and ENJOY!

Bob Dorrance

A SHORT INTRODUCTION:

A little planning now will make things easier once the construction starts. I'll give you some pointers about the different aspects of pond building that have worked for me. I've done a great deal of the "trial and error" stuff and hopefully, sharing my experiences in this regard will save you some time and effort.

There are a number of sites on the internet that will tell you about all the things you "need" to do this or that during the project, but if there is one thing I'm big on, it's "keeping it simple".

Naturally, building a pond from scratch requires a good deal of physical work, particularly the digging part. My son and I managed that part of the job with shovels and sweat, and as you can see in some of the pictures, we moved quite a bit of dirt. Our part of the country is mostly clay so we managed to burn a few extra calories. If you are physically unable to do this kind of work, then maybe hiring a friend or neighbor or strong relative will be the answer. That way too, you can sit in your lawn chair, supervise the dig, and bring refreshments when needed.

It might be best to read this entire book before you begin because hearing about the experiences of others will tend to get your imagination going and get you thinking about what touches and features you might like to incorporate into your own pond. In other words, it will help you develop your game plan.

And, finally, if you run into any problems during the job, you can log onto my [Website](#), look through the articles there, or [email](#) me and I will be happy to answer any questions. Bob



CHAPTER 1:

PRE-DIG CONSIDERATIONS

Logically, the first question you should ask is WHERE? Do you have a huge yard with a lot of trees and shrubs and flowerbeds? In other words what is the present landscape like? Would you prefer your pond in a sunny spot or in the shade? That may not seem too important, but if you should decide to surround your pond with flowers, it becomes very important. It seems (to me at least) that there are many more varieties of flowers that are sun lovers rather than ones that prefer shade. Another consideration also is that if you place your pond too near to trees, then falling leaves become a cleanup problem.

Once you've decided on a location, then the next question is HOW BIG? Do you want a small pond that will only need a few hundred gallons to fill, or something more like what you see in the pictures that accompany this text that holds around three thousand gallons? Do you have a water spigot close enough to your pond location so that you don't need three hundred feet of hose to fill it?

If you are going to have a pond with a pump and filter to re-circulate the water, then you will need an electrical source nearby. (More about electrical work later). Are you thinking of having a water fall or fountain? Do you think that you are going to want fish or other aquatic life in your pond?

Will you need a fence? Does your city or township require fences or any other kind of safeguards around ponds? If there are no local ordinances in this regard, then how about your own personal feelings about keeping such an area safe for small children, who all seem to love water and gravitate to it like bees to honey?

Where is the one really good spot in your yard where you love to sit and commune with nature? If you have a spot like that, then that is probably the perfect place for your pond. Just sitting and watching a waterfall or fountain is very relaxing, and if you've decided to liven up your private little lake, then choose fish like Koi, Comets, and Shabunkins which seem to be quite hardy specimens. They winter well, even here in northern Ohio. We haven't lost one fish to the weather in the eight years we've had our pond.

Now, as to the basic "hardware" needs. Set your mind to having a strong liner, even if it's more expensive. This is the key to a trouble free pond. Firestone makes a liner material called EPDM

PondGuard that is tough and very puncture resistant. (Holes in the liner are a real pain in the neck!). Besides the liner, you'll need a submersible water pump, a pond filter, a UV light (sometimes called a UV filter), and a few pond plants. I'll go over these items in more detail shortly.



CHAPTER 2:

POND CONSTRUCTION

By now the location of your little lake should be decided. You've picked a good spot in your yard where you can see the pond from different places, and it's near enough to the house so you can see it from a window. This is really part of the fun because you can visualize the landscaping ideas you'll be incorporating into the pond area once the dig is finished.

The first thing to do is outline the perimeter of your pond. Avoid square or sharp corners because your pond liner will conform much better to a freeform round or kidney shape. You should also have made the decision by this time about the size of the design. I would strongly suggest not going too small. I changed the size of our pond two times because the first and second time just weren't big enough. Lay out the final design and size on the ground where you plan to dig with a can of spray paint.

The next thing to decide is the depth of the pond. I would suggest at least twenty four to thirty six inches. Our pond is thirty six to forty eight inches deep and the main reason is the fact that we have fish. Some of our fish are quite large, we have two Koi's that are about eighteen inches long and they definitely need the room. If you're going to have fish, or think you might get fish in the future, then don't skimp on pond depth. If you live in a cold winter climate like we do, then the fish need room at the bottom to winter over. Like I mentioned previously, we haven't lost a fish to the winter in the eight years we've had our pond.



Keep in mind that you want to keep the top 'shoreline' edges pretty level. The reason for this is that once you put the liner in and fill the pond with water you won't have a large piece of the liner showing

on the high side of the hole. Also as you dig, remember that you are going to want a ledge most of the way around the perimeter of the hole, about six to twelve inches down from the top and about twelve inches wide. This will provide you with a “shelf” to set your pond plants on. More about pond plants later, because they are very important.

Once the hole is dug and shaped to your satisfaction and with any protruding sharp rocks removed to provide a relatively smooth surface for the liner to rest on, then you are ready to install the liner. Here are the quick calculations to figure the size of your liner:

Length: Length of the dug out area plus two feet plus the depth plus three feet.

Width: Width of the dug out area plus two feet plus the depth plus three feet.

For Example: The hole is ten feet long by six feet wide and the depth is three feet. Therefore, the liner LENGTH is $10 + 2 + 3 + 3 = 18$ feet. And the WIDTH is $6 + 2 + 3 + 3 = 14$ feet. So the needed liner size is 18 feet long and 14 feet wide.

Some people have lined the dug hole with old carpet scraps to provide a little extra cushion under the liner and also a little more protection in case a sharp rock may have escaped detection. Personally, I didn't do this and we haven't had any leakage problems.

So, now it's time to install the liner. Make it easier and get some help for this operation. Position the liner over the hole, trying to keep an even overlap on all four sides. Next push the liner down into the hole as evenly as you can, keeping in mind that you want the overlap to be as equal as possible all the way around the hole. When you are satisfied that the liner is positioned correctly, place a few heavy rocks on the overlap equally spaced around the pond.



Now it's time to start filling the pond. Obviously, the smaller the pond, the quicker the fill. A pond the size of ours took quite a while, and while it was filling we used the time to disperse the liner evenly so that you don't get a lot of large folds. You're bound to get some folds but if you work on smoothing them out as the water is going in the end result will be a nicer appearance. If you have to make any moves to even out the overlap, do it before too much water is added because it gets heavy fairly quickly and once the weight of the water takes over you won't be moving anything. As the pond fills and the liner conforms to the shape of the hole and you see that your overlap around the edges is looking pretty good, then you can start to relax because the hard part is done. Easy sailing? That's next!



After the pond is filled, cut off the excess liner you have around the perimeter, leaving yourself a foot or so around the whole edge of the pond. (NOTE) If you intend to have a waterfall, you should add the area that it will take to **LINE THE WATERFALL** to the dimensions of your pond liner and cut the additional area as a part of the liner. The idea here is to keep **ALL** the liner in one piece. If you have to use an extra piece of liner for the waterfall, then make sure it is positioned properly so that all the water pumped to the top of the waterfall flows back into the pond.

Just a few words about waterfalls. The sound of splashing water is comforting, and if you do decide to put a waterfall in, you won't want to be without it. For our waterfall I made a fairly large mound of dirt behind the pond, approximately in the center. I purchased a large tub with a spout in it (available at Lowes or Home Depot, etc.) and placed it on a leveled area in the aforementioned dirt pile, with the spout toward the pond and angled slightly down. As the water fills the tub it runs out of the spout and into the pond. As you can see in the picture, you can't see this tub reservoir because I have placed rocks around and on top of it to make it look natural. With

the water running over the stones it really does look like a natural waterfall.



Once the pond is filled, then it's time to let your landscaping desires take over. This is where the creative part comes in. I chose natural sandstone rocks for our pond, but that was what I liked. The only thing controlling your artistic instincts now is your imagination.



Next we'll get into pond necessities.

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