

## Daily Challenge Day 23 Build a Pond

1. Watch Countryfile BBC Matt's Home Patch where he builds a pond in his garden but also creates a small pond using an old plastic box.

It's exciting to watch pond skaters, water lice (like long-legged underwater woodlice), freshwater shrimps, and if you're lucky, a few damselflies darting around the water. You might even see a bird having a bath.

### **You will need:**

A container that will hold water - washing-up bowl or storage container

Some gravel, stones, rocks

Some small pond plants



### **Instructions:**

1. Put your container into your chosen place while it's empty. Once it's full of water, it will be difficult to move! Ideally you'll put it somewhere that gets a good amount of light, but isn't in full sunlight all day. You



can sink it into the ground or leave it proud of the surface, but if the edges are level with the ground, more creatures can get in and out.

2. Even a mini-pond can be a hazard for small children, so position it where it will be safe.

3. Prepare your pond. Seal any drainage holes.

4. Put a layer of clean gravel in the bottom if you wish. Don't use soil - it is too full of nutrients and it will prompt blooms of unsightly algae to form.

5. Make sure that wildlife can get in and out, by using bricks, rocks or logs to create stepping stones in and out of the pond.

6. At last, you can fill your pond! Whenever possible, use rainwater. Tapwater contains too many chemicals to be good for a pond.

7. Plant up your pond. It is best to put in plants in special aquatic plant pots (which have mesh sides). Use a very low nutrient soil (you can buy special soil for ponds), mixed with grit.

Just be very careful to only use plants that won't grow too large for such a small space. Two or three plants is the maximum for a pond this size. Try plants such as water forget-me-not, lesser spearwort and marsh marigold.

Aftercare. For the first few months, don't worry if you get algae or blanket weed (which is like strings of green gloop), get children to remove it by winding it around a stick - it's fun!

As your mini-pond matures, all the pond creatures you've attracted will help keep the water clear. You may need to top the pond up in hot weather - try to use rainwater from a water butt.

And now see what arrives! Don't be tempted to bring in buckets of pond life from elsewhere. Pond creatures are great at finding ponds themselves.