

WINTER POND

CARE GUIDE



To keep your pond and its inhabitants healthy through the winter months, there are some preparations to be made.

- **Fall clean-up:** Decaying plant materials may be harmful to fish. Scoop out fallen leaves and trim the leaves and stems of pond plants down to just above the waterline. Tropical water lilies need to be brought indoors. They can be trimmed back to just above soil level, then placed in a plastic tub, cover with wet newspapers, and add a tight-fitting lid. Store in a garage or basement area that is cool, but doesn't freeze.
- **Pond critters:** Continue feeding fish while they are active and water temps are above 55°. Frogs & toads will crawl into the small crevasses between rocks in your pond. If you'd like to provide an even cozier spot, place a shallow plastic container of sand and chopped leaves at the bottom of the pond. This provides extra space for burrowing critters and can be easily removed when the pond is cleaned in the spring.
- **Running the waterfall:** Running your waterfall in the winter will result in some beautiful winter scenes. It will also keep a hold open in the ice and will help oxygenate the water for your pond inhabitants. You will want to disconnect your automatic refill line if one was installed. It may freeze if left connected. Water will evaporate during the winter, so watch the water level and add water as needed. Ponds with long or slow-moving streams also need to be watched during extremely cold weather. Ice dams can form and divert water over the side of the liner.
- **Shutting the waterfall down:** Remove the pump from your skimmer, submerge in a bucket of water, and store in a frost-free location. Add a floating heater (available at most farm stores) to keep a hole open in the ice. If you have large fish, or many fish, you will also want to add a 150 gallon-per-hour recirculating pump near the surface so it bubbles above the surface. This adds oxygen that they need to survive.