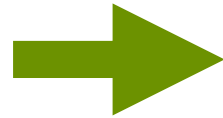


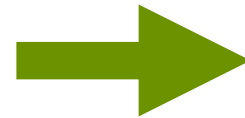
Pond Maintenance Calendar



Place a ball on the surface of your pond to stop it freezing completely. This will prevent noxious gases building up and reducing oxygen levels. Don't break the ice as the shock waves can kill the animals.



If your pond is amphibian friendly you should start to see frogspawn in your pond. Plants will start to sprout while water fleas will soon clear any excess algal growth.



Start to control the growth of blanket weed and duckweed, which can smother a pond and shut out all the light.

Blanket weed can be teased out of the water using a stick but don't remove it all as tadpoles love to eat it. Lay it on the side of the pond for 48 hours to allow the small creatures to get back into the water. You can then transfer it to your compost bin as it makes some excellent compost. Alternatively, try putting in a bundle of barley straw in the water. This should help prevent the growth of blanket weed.

Duckweed can be scooped off with a small net, or controlled by planting larger plants.

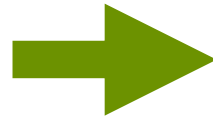
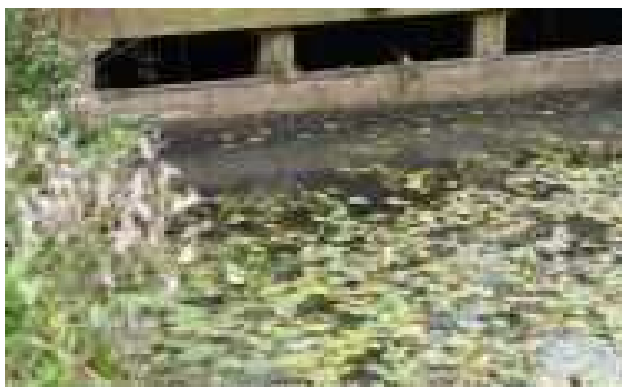


&



Now is the time to carry out any maintenance work on your pond. If your pond is becoming too shallow, clear out some, but not all, of the silt as it will contain a lot of eggs and larvae. The silt can be composted. Take care not to damage the pond liner and leave any vegetation on the side to drain overnight so pond creatures can return to the water.

Remember You can remove leaves that fall into your pond by using a rake to prevent too much silting of your garden pond. Traditionally people have netted their ponds to prevent leaves from going into the ponds. However this can sometimes result in toads and newts getting caught in the netting.



&



Cut back some of the reeds on a rotational basis. Don't be afraid to be ruthless, they will grow and spread quickly back again. If your pond freezes over, put a pan of hot water on the surface and allow the ice to gently melt.



Image by Alan Price



Don't panic if your pond is starting to look like a big black writhing mass of tadpoles. Sadly not all of them will make it to adult frogs. Do not be tempted to give tadpoles to friends or neighbours ponds as this may aid the spread of amphibian disease. Dragonfly and damselfly nymphs start to climb up the reeds before they emerge.



Your pond should be disturbed as little as possible as various species are breeding and growing. Keep some longer grass around the pond for froglets and toadlets that will be leaving the pond. Top up the water if it looks very low. Try to use rain water from a water butt or tap water that has stood for a few days allowing chlorine to dissipate and the temperature to regulate.

