

Pond Troubleshooting

As our climate changes, gardens are becoming even more vital to wildlife and people. They can provide shade, absorb carbon, soak up flood water and help to cool buildings. A well managed network of gardens stretching across Sussex would also help wildlife to move more freely and adapt to climate change enabling us to create a living landscape.

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Do you have a problem with your pond but not sure what is causing it and the best way to deal with it?

Problem: Duckweed

Origin: Often brought in from outside sources i.e. ducks. Excessive chemicals and nutrients.

Solution: Scrape off with a board or remove weekly with sieve or stock with extra plants to oxygenate and shade out weed

Wildlife Implications: Great for attracting frogs and amphibians as it offers good camouflage from predators whilst they are in the pond.

Problem: Blanketweed

Origin: High nutrient levels and increase in light levels in spring can allow blanketweed to flourish before other plants able to grow. Only problematical in small ponds. May be brought in by other sources e.g. planting or other pond life

Solution: Remove some of the weed using a rake. Drag the weed out on to the side of the pond. Sort through the weed to return as many pond creatures back to the water as soon as possible. Leave the weed on the on the edge of the pond for a further 48 hours to allow any remaining creatures to find their way back into the water. Remove the weed and compost.

Wildlife Implications: Blanket weed is used by a range of pond amphibian's newts and their tadpoles and invertebrates as hiding places. It also offers a good food source.

Problem: Green Water

Origin: Algal Bloom: common in new ponds that have been filled with tap water, may recur in spring because of increased light levels. If suddenly occurring in new pond this may indicate pollution incident i.e. leeching from compost bin, run off from chemicals used in garden?

Solution: If it is a new pond you will need to leave the pond to stabilise. Adding barley straw is sometimes beneficial as is old willow stems.

Wildlife Implications: Do not use chemical control to sort the problem as this may lead to loss of important microscopic algae grazers from colonising the pond.

Problem: Brown Water

Origin: Low Oxygen levels and high nutrients causing imbalance – especially if you have water fern which produces nitrogen.

Solution: Add pollution tolerant oxygenating plants such as yellow and white water Lilly.

Wildlife Implications: Low oxygen levels may limit the variety of wildlife in your pond.



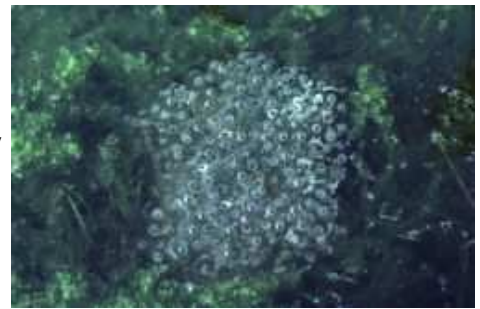
Image by Darin Smith

Problem: Too much spawn or too many frogs

Origin: Frogs producing an abundance of spawn as part of the natural survival method.

Solution: No such thing as too much frog spawn, this only occurs seasonally and will not result in any harm to the pond

Wildlife Implications: Do not remove the spawn from the pond to give and to a friend for there pond or put it in a "wild" pond. We recommend this as it otherwise it may aid the spread of amphibian disease and invasive plants.



Frogspawn

Problem: Frogs Disappearing

Origin: Frogs eaten by fish/moved on to land after breeding/ pond inaccessible because of physical barriers or loss of habitat.



Log pile

Solution: Provide habitats such as long grass, logs, stones, mossy rockeries suitable for hibernation ensure your gardens offers good connectivity with the surrounding habitats.

Wildlife Implications: Loss of frogs could lead to a loss of predators further up the food chain that are reliant on them as a food source.

Problem: Dead Frogs

Origin: Frogs exhausted after spawning, predation or an amphibian disease (red leg or chytrid fungus)

Solution: Maybe a natural occurrence – if you have noticed an unusual amphibian death or multiple deaths contact Sussex Wildlife Trust. (See top of page for contacts).



Pond liner

Problem: Punctured Liner

Origin: Sharpe stones, roots, dogs feet, hand tool penetrating liner.

Solution: Patches and kits are available from local garden centres to fix pond liners. As a last resort turn punctured pond into a bog area and build a new pond next to it.

Wildlife Implications: Draining and refilling could cause massive disruption to wildlife.

Problem: Grass and Leaves Blowing into Pond

Origin: Over hanging trees etc

Solution: Cultivate fringe of tall grass or vegetation at pond edge to catch leaves and grass cuttings.

Wildlife Implications: If you net your pond amphibians can easily get caught up in the netting. Ensure you leave at least a 2inch gap between the ground and netting for animals to get in and out of the pond.



Leaves on pond



Frozen pond at Seven Sisters

Problem: Frozen Pond

Origin: Temperatures below freezing.

Solution: Float a ball on the pond overnight to prevent the pond from freezing. Rest a pan of hot water on the ice to melt it. **Do not** pour boiling water onto the surface or break the surface of the frozen pond with a gardening tool etc.

Wildlife Implications: If the pond freezes over noxious gases can build up causing hibernating amphibians within the pond to die.