

HOTWGPS Newsletter



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Pond Vac

As a reminder, this is a "Members Only" benefit. You can rent this super-duper pond cleaning machine very reasonably! John Enders is the "official pond Vac keeper". Call him 254-848-9596 or send him an email at jnenders@aol.com to schedule your time with the machine. One note of caution when using the pond Vac, watch how much water you are removing from your pond!! It works so well sucking up the yuk that one can easily forget how much water is also being removed! That is the voice of experience talking!!



The Water Garden's Tip of the Week

If you have not invested in a [pond deicer](#) and the pond ices over this winter, do NOT break the ice. Doing so can harm your fish. Instead use warm water to melt the ice to maintain a hole at all times.

Editor Note: Speaking of cold weather – it IS coming! For those of us who run our waterfalls all winter long, be sure to keep watch on any ice buildup that can potentially cause water to seep around the liner.



From the pond guy blog 11/6/17



I heard fish can get swim bladder disease this time of year, what is it?

ASKED BY: Becky of Trumbell, CT

A: Many bony fish, like the fancy goldfish found in ornamental ponds, have an organ called a swim bladder. This gas-filled sack has two main purposes: It helps the fish control its buoyancy and remain at a particular depth without having to waste energy on swimming, and it keeps the fish in an upright position. When a fish is unable to control its depth, or starts swimming sideways, upside side down, or head or tail down, it may have "swim bladder disease."

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A fish with swim bladder disease can be a troubling sight to see, but it can be treated. Here's what you need to know about what causes it and how to get your fish swimming the right way again.

Your Gluttonous Goldfish

Although intestinal parasites and microorganisms can cause swim bladder disease, it mainly stems from overeating, eating too quickly or gulping too much air during feeding time. The fish gobbles mouthfuls of pellets, which expand like sponges as they soak up water in the mouth and digestive tract leading to constipation. Enough pressure on the swim bladder will cause the fish to swim any which way but up.

Time for a Diet Change

Water temperatures dip – sometimes precipitously – in the fall, and that change can slow your fishes' digestive processes. They have a harder time digesting protein when it's cold, and it can build up in their gut and result in an enlarged intestine.

To prevent this from happening, switch your fish food during the fall (and spring). Using a [pond thermometer](#), periodically check your water temperature. Once temperatures are consistently between 40°F and 50°F, change over to a lower-protein, higher-carbohydrate diet like [The Pond Guy® Spring and Fall Fish Food](#), which is packed with easier-to-

digest wheat germ. Feed them two to three times a week and only give them an amount that they will eat within 5 minutes. When temperatures drop below 40°F, stop feeding them entirely.

Peas to the Rescue

The best treatment for swim bladder disease is found in your refrigerator or freezer. Frozen or cooked peas, will blast through the impaction and reduce the pressure on the fish's swim bladder. If your fish starts floating sideways, we recommend you stop feeding them for a few days and then hand feed peas to help clear up any blockages.

Medicating fish in outdoor ponds with cooler temperatures really is not an option, as the medications won't work – so stick with the fasting-plus-peas remedy.

If one of your fish is really stressed, a salt bath could help – but you will need to dissolve the salt in an indoor holding tank filled with warm 78 to 80°F water. Keep in mind that when you transfer your fish from the cooler 40°-50°F outdoor water to the warmer treatment tank, that temperature change can easily shock the fish. It should be avoided.



From the pond guy blog 11/6/17

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ASKED BY: Quintin of Pine Bluff, AR

My water quality is good, but what should I do over the winter to keep it that way?

Editor's note: this article is written for a "natural" pond/tank, but the information is applicable for our backyard features as well.

A: When it comes to doing chores at the pond, it is easy to let your guard down this fall. Thanks to your hard-working bacteria, the water is clean and clear with minimal algae, and your fish are happy. You have nothing to do but coast into winter and hibernate until spring.

Not so fast. As water temperatures drop, those bacteria and algacides stop fighting off excess nutrients and cold-temperature plant growth. They are no longer effective at their jobs, and so you need to step in and help. Here's what you can do to maintain pristine water quality over the winter.

Add Some Pond Logic® Eco Boost™ or other treatments such as Microbe Lift Fall & Winter Prep which are formulated to bind organic debris suspended in the water. These treatments help to clear water and enhance beneficial bacteria. It also provides more than 80 trace minerals to fish, keeping them healthy over the winter. EcoBoost™ has no temperature restrictions, so you can use it all year round. Simply mix the powder with some water in a pail and pour it in the pond.

Tint with Pond Dye:

During the cold temperatures and even iced-over conditions your pond's bottom can still be exposed to sunlight. Pond Dye can be used year-round – winter included – to shade your pond from the sun's UV rays. The dye also imparts a dramatic hue to the water, giving it a great look when it ices over.

Aerate and Oxygenate: You can also improve water quality through the winter by keeping the oxygen levels up and water circulating. If you are not going to use the pond for ice-skating or hockey, we

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recommend you use a subsurface aerator, like the [Airmax® Aeration Systems](#). The system will keep the air bubbles flowing throughout the water column while maintaining a hole in the ice for gas exchange. If you have a fountain running, remove it and store it for the winter. Ice can damage the motor in the pump.

Before you hibernate for the winter, spend a few hours out at the pond to prepare it for winter. When you look out on a crystal clear pond in January, you'll be happy you did!



From the pond guy blog 11/11/17

NOW THAT MY PLANTS ARE GONE, HOW DO I PROTECT MY FISH?

ASKED BY: Vicky of Chatham, NH

Editor's Note: Cover the pond with netting! This will help to keep predators out and will also keep out most of any leaves etc. that may be blown around during the windy winter days & nights.

A: This time of year, aquatic plants are tough to find in backyard ponds. Cold temperatures and fewer hours of sunlight make all the lush greenery die off or go dormant for the winter -- and that leaves your fish high and dry and without any protection from hungry predators, like raccoons, herons and passing coyotes.

The lack of lily pads, hyacinth leaves and other plant cover also means more sunlight will penetrate the water. All those rays can lead to algae blooms and poor water quality, which is not something your hibernating fish will appreciate.

So how do you protect your finned friends from hungry bad guys during the sparse winter months?



Here's what we recommend.

Create fish habitats: Because fish will naturally hide in crevices between rocks and other sunken debris, replicate that environment by creating fish habitats and

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caves. Prop up some slate slabs to make a fabricated lean-to. Build extra hiding places with clever rock placement. Provide an ecosystem that will encourage them to do what's natural.

Install fish shelters: In the winter, fish will intuitively head to deeper water where it's warmer and safe from claws, paws and beaks. But to add another layer of protection -- particularly if your pond isn't that deep -- give them plenty of sheltering options. Install a [Koi Kastle](#) or two. Lay down some empty flower pots or short lengths of 4-inch PVC pipe. Give your finned pals plenty of options to hide, just in case predators stop by the pond.

Crank on your aeration system: As your [aeration system](#) bubbles and infuses oxygen throughout the water, it creates water surface movement that can help camouflage your fish from overhead predators. The aerator will also keep the water churning, and create a hole in the ice for gas exchange. If it's not running already, now's the time to crank it on!

Until your plants start growing again, keep your fish safe and sound with these simple steps – and do it before the frigid temperatures really kick in.



On the Lighter Side

Ole and Lena were worried about how poorly their young son Sven was doing in school. After Sven brought home a report card with four F's and one D, Ole appeared to be deep in thought for quite a while before he finally said, "OK, Sven. I tink I know vhat da problem is. I tink yew are spendin' too much time on dat one subject."



An Idaho potato farmer hired Ole to grade his potatoes. "All you have to do," the farmer told Ole, "is to toss the big potatoes into that bin and the small potatoes into that other bin."

After about half an hour, Ole went looking for his employer and announced that he was quitting. "But why?" said the farmer. "It's not hard work arid I pay very well."

Ole replied, "Yeah, dat's right. Da verk is easy. But I can't stand making all dose decisions!"



Lena went away for the weekend to a business conference.

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During a break, she decided to call home collect. .

Little Ole picked up the phone and heard a stranger's voice say, "We have Lena on hold. Will you accept the charges?"

Frantically, little Ole dropped the receiver and ran outside screaming, "Dad! Dey've got mom and dey vant money!"



One day Sven was taking a walk down a country road and he noticed his neighbor, Ole, kept lifting a pig up to a tree to eat apples, one after another.

"Hey Ole," said Sven. "Vhy don't yew just put a bunch of apples on da ground. It vill save yew time."

"Don't be a dummy, Sven," replied Ole. "Vhat's time to a pig?"



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Steve Kainer
Owner/General Manager



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Fax 512-260-5060
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www.hillcountrywatergardens.com

Making outdoors awesome

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628 North Robinson Dr.
Robinson, TX 76706
254.662.0311

MATT BARRERA
MANAGER

robinsongreenhouse@gmail.com

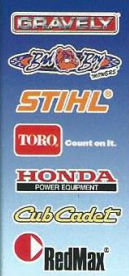


Brian Sikes

brian@landscapesupplywaco.com

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