Pond Plants
An Advanced Master Gardener Requirement
by
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Decide What You Want

• Formal or Informal?

• Flowing water or still?
Rocks only?  
Plants & Rocks?
Plants and Rocks?
Fish, Plants and Rocks?
Or other animal life?
Just Rocks

- Don’t have to divide or fertilize plants
- Can add harsher chemicals to keep water clear (many chemicals kill plant and animal life)
Plants and Rocks

- Calming, more natural appearance
- Plants need to be divided or thinned to prevent overcrowding and invasiveness
- Insects will come
  
  So will algae!
Plants, Rocks & Fish

• Calming natural appearance
• Insects will come if fish are small
• Large koi or goldfish eat some plant roots and insects as well as algae
• Fish breed prolifically if you have a shallow area
• Algae will still grow, especially if it’s sunny
Some Bugs that may come to your pond

Water Strider (Gerridae)

Feed on small insects that fall into the water or float up from below
Whirligig Beetles
Gyrinidae

Small 1/8-5/8” long
Often group together and swim in circles
Have 2 eyes below and 2 eyes above the water
Eat small insects that fall in the water
Backswimmers
Notonectidae

¼-5/8” long, Hind legs are fringed with hair, they row with their hind legs while On their back. Eat Insects that fall in the water, as well as aquatic insects and small tadpoles
Water Boatmen
Corixidae

1/8 -1/2” long. Front legs are fringed with hair, they scoop up algae to eat.
Predacious Diving Beetle
Dytiscidae

1/16-1 5/8” long. Back legs are fringed with hair, legs used like oars. Eat dragonfly nymphs, leeches, snails, tadpoles and small fish.
Dragonflies & Damselflies

Nymphs eat aquatic insects, tadpoles and small fish, Adults eat flying ants, mosquitoes, Gnats, etc.
Few Plants Available for Your Pond
Floating Plants

**Water Hyacinths**
*Pontederiaceae*

- Grow up to 8” above the water
- Pale lavender-blue flowers
- Floats freely in the pond
- Long roots obtain nutrients from the water
- Prefers sunny location
- Not winter hardy
Water Lettuce
Pista stratiotes

Floats freely in the pond
Prefers calm water that warms quickly
Grows 2-4” above the water
Long roots obtain nutrients from water
Not winter hardy
Rooted Plants with Floating Leaves

Snowflakes
Nymphoides aquatica (white)
Nymphoides geminata (yellow)

6-18” of water over crown
White or yellow flowers
Regular Water Clover (Marsilea quadrifolia)  
Utah Native Water Clover  
Cut-leaf Clover (Marsilea schebeana)  

0-8” of water above the crown  
Leaves can grow 2” above the water, but generally float on top  
Great for those who are always looking for 4-leaf clovers, are Irish, or like good luck
Water Hawthorne (Aponogeton distachyus)

Prefers filtered sun
2-16” of water above the crown
Fragrant flowers (if you like getting wet to smell them)
Hardy
Water Poppy ((Hydrocleys nymphoides))

Prefers slow moving or still water
Not winter hardy
6-18” of water above the crown
Yellow, three petaled flowers with dark center
Not winter hardy
Trailing Water Plants
(“ground” covers)

Water Forget-me-not (Myosotis scorpioides)
White or blue varieties
Boggy soil to 4” of water above the crown
Red Amaranth (Alternathera reinickii)

Prefers still water, full sun, but is shade tolerant
Boggy to 10” of water above crown
Not winter hardy
Water Sensitive Plant (Neptunia oleracea)

Fern-like leaves that close when touched
Feathery yellow flowers
Boggy to 6” of water above the crown
Golden Buttons (Cotula coronopifolia)

Boggy to 4” of water above the crown  
Grows 6-8” high  
Compact round yellow flowers June to Oct.  
Not winter hardy
Parrot Feather (Myriophyllum aquaticum)

Feathery Parrot-green leaves that can rise up to 12 inches above the water
Semi-hardy (overwinters most years for me)
Emergent, Broadleaf Plants

Marsh Marigold (Caltha palustris)

Hardy Perrenial
Yellow or white flower varieties
Blooms when the daffodils do
Not invasive
Boggy to 6” of water above the crown
Arrowhead (Sagittaria “bloom n baby”)

Arrow-shaped leaves
Pink or White three-petaled flowers
Hardy
Edible roots (stolons)
Boggy to 4” of water above crown
Lizard’s Tail (Saurusus ceruus)

Boggy to 8” below the water
Heart-shaped leaves
White flowers
Prefers calm water
Sun, semi-shade
Skunk Cabbage (Lysichiton americanus)

Hardy perennial
Won’t that year if moved
Yellow or white calla lily-like spathes
Boggy to 4” of water over crown
Grows to 4’ tall
Taro (Colocasia esculenta)

Nicknamed “duck potato” Rhizomes can be baked and eaten or used to make poi
Prefers boggy to 4” of water above crown
Grown for foliage (leaves can grow to 3 ft long, plants can grow 5-6 ft tall)
Red Leaf Plantain (Alternanthera sessilis ‘Rubra’)

Boggy to 4” of water above crown
Prefers full sun, but is shade-tolerant
Grows 8-24” tall
Grown for foliage
Water Cannas (Canna glauca, amerricanallis, “tropicana”, “Pretoria”, etc)

Many species available
Red, yellow, orange and combinations
Some varieties have striped leaves
Grows 3-6 ft high
Boggy to 6” of water over crown
Emergent, Erect, Narrow leaves

Flowering Rush (Butomus umbellatus)

Hardy Perennial
Boggy to 6” of water above crown
White or pale pink flowers
Sun to part shade
Spider Lily (Hymenocallis caribaea)

Boggy to 6” of water above crown
Flowers are white with narrow petals that curve downward, giving a spider-like appearance.
Umbrella Palm (Cyperus)
Prefers hot and sunny
Boggy to 6” of water above crown
Several species available
Heights vary from 12” to 4’
Bull Rushes and Cat tails

Hardy Perennials
Sun or part shade
Boggy to 8” above crown
Several varieties available
Height varies from one ft.
too several feet
Spike Rush (Eleocharis)

Sun to part shade
Boggy to 6 inches of water above crown
Hardy

Spike rush in corner of box
Lilies (Nymphaea)

Tropical Lilies

Blues, purples, white, yellow, pink, red and blends
Fragrant
Not winter hardy
Flowers held above water surface
Many night-blooming varieties available
Victoria

4-12” of water above crown
Not hardy
Leaves can get 3’ across
Hardy Lilies

- No fragrance
- Flowers float on water surface
- No blue or purple varieties
- No night-blooming varieties
- 6-30” of water above crown depending on variety
Remember, Water plants drink lots of water, the more plants you have in your pond, the faster the water level of your pond goes down. Try a few new tender varieties each year and see what you like. Try to achieve a good balance between plants, fish and water to make a natural-looking, relaxing place to enjoy.

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