

1. Test the water and O₂ level

- ✓ Regular testing provides crucial information regarding the health of your pond. Before you winterize your pond, perform a comprehensive water test, including oxygen level, to determine current conditions. Monitor any parameters that are awry and take steps to rectify the factors that contribute to them. Add salt to appropriate levels (.2 - .25) to prepare for winter, salt will reduce the risk of parasites on your fish.

2. Clean the pond bottom

- ✓ Fallen leaves from nearby trees and bushes, as well as leaves from your pond plants, can quickly accumulate on the bottom of your pond. The decaying vegetation can compromise water quality so it is important to remove as much material from the bottom of your pond as possible. Also, prune your marginal pond plants and remove floating plant material before they decay. Your skimming and vacuuming or dip netting efforts will take care of the rest.

3. Clean skimmers, filters, and pumps

- ✓ A dirty filtration system is inefficient. It works harder and accomplishes less. Eventually, it may clog and not work at all. Take this opportunity to perform comprehensive seasonal maintenance. Clean and replace filter media as needed to make sure your pond filtration system is in top condition. In a few weeks, you will be looking to minimize the amount of time you spend dipping into frigid waters.

4. Install Netting

- ✓ Now that your pond is clean and winter ready, keep it clean. A pond net draped over your pond will prevent the majority of leaves and twigs from getting into the water. Simply unfasten the pond netting and remove fallen leaves in bulk. Repeat this process until all the leaves have dropped from the trees and the area around the pond is raked free of leaves.

5. Switch fish foods and gradually reduce feeding

- ✓ As temperatures drop below 70°F, reduce protein content in your fishes' diet by mixing a high-quality, low-protein food like Wheat Germ Koi Food. When water temperatures drop below 60°F, feed exclusively a wheat-germ-based food in smaller quantities. At 50°F, you should stop feeding altogether.

6. Move plants before the first freeze

- ✓ When the average daily temperature is below 50°F or before the first hard freeze, place hardy water lilies deep in your pond. If your pond is shallow (Less than 18" in Depth), bring the plants indoors along with any subtropical or tropical pond plants you want to keep.

7. Aerate

- ✓ Aeration will maintain proper oxygen levels and help keep the pond surface open when freezing temperatures arrive. If you plan to use your aerator throughout the winter months, you need to set it up correctly so it does not harm your pond inhabitants.. Do not place the diffuser (air stone) on the bottom of the pond to prevent warmer pond water from mixing with the cooler water near the surface. Monitor your aeration for any blocked lines (Tip, insulate your air line to prevent condensation from freezing), or during extreme cold spells, be prepared to pour some hot water to re-open the hole in the ice.