

# Is your Pond Ready for Winter

## Why prepare your pond for winter?

It is important to properly prepare your pond for winter. Throughout the summer, organic debris builds up in your pond from falling leaves, fish waste, decaying plants and algae. Excess organic matter will reduce water quality and stress fish and plants during the winter months. The following proven techniques will keep your fish and plants healthy during the long winter months.

## Adopt a winter-specific diet

As the water temperature in your pond decreases fish require less protein in their diet. **API® Cool Water Food** is specially formulated to provide your Koi and Goldfish with the appropriate nutrition for cooler temperatures. In cooler temperate regions when the water temperatures approach 42°F fish will eat less than during the warmer temperatures. Once the temperature in your pond drops below 42°F, fish will cease eating. If fish have been fed properly through the summer months they have ample reserves to survive the rigors of winter.

## Adjust filtration & circulation

Filtration is not necessary for the winter, but circulation is recommended to keep an open area on your pond surface when ice forms. This opening must be present to prevent toxic gases which can accumulate from the decomposition of organic matter. Reposition your pump near the surface for the winter, or utilize a heater or bubbling device to keep a small area of the surface open. Remember if you are going to disconnect your filter for the winter, drain it. If you store it full of water and it freezes, the ice could damage part or all of the filter.

## Move fish indoors

If you are moving fish inside for the winter, you can utilize your filter inside and move your established biological pond filter to your indoor container. The only way to be sure that your biological filter is working correctly is to test your water. To make the correct decisions you need the correct information. To get the correct information about your water quality you must test it.

## Fall clean-up

Remove excess debris that has accumulated on the bottom of your pond. This can be done with a plastic rake, sturdy net or any device that will not damage the liner or fish in your pond. Finer sediment can be removed from your pond by using a submersible pump or special pond vacuum. Fight any remaining algae with **PondCare AlgaeFix**. Using **PondCare Pond Zyme with Barley** or **EcoFix** in the fall reduces organic matter during the winter.

## Make your pond water clean & healthy

Perform a 20% to 30% water change in your pond and replace it with tap water, be sure to use **PondCare Stress Coat** to make the tap water safe. The addition of **PondCare Pond Salt** will replenish important electrolytes to aid the fish during the stressful winter months. **PondCare Pond Salt** is an all natural sea salt that provides electrolytes that fish lose in times of stress. If any of your pond fish have been inadvertently wounded while cleaning the pond, use **PondCare MelaFix** to aid the fish in tissue re-growth and **PimaFix** to treat infections on the body and fins.

## Your plants need care too

Proper care of plants should also take place at this time. Discard floating plants such as water hyacinth, before they decompose. Trim back all potted plants. Your hardy lilies and lotus plants should be placed in the lowest part of your pond for the winter months. Remove tropical lilies from their pots, trim off leaves and roots. Rinse off all soil from the rhizome and wrap in moist (not wet) peat moss. Store in this manner in a cool area until spring. If you desire to keep your tropical plants going throughout the winter an indoor container can be set up. The key to success indoors for plants is adequate lighting and proper heat. Remember excess nutrients found in your tap water can cause excessive algae growth causing many problems. Moving plants indoor can certainly provide flowers and foliage throughout the winter. When plants are moved indoors they still will need the necessary nutrients for proper growth. PondCare Aquatic Plant Food Tablets provide the essential nutrients and trace elements needed by aquatic plants.

Performing these simple maintenance procedures ensures that you have done everything you can to prepare for another growing season. It is recommended that this procedure take place in the fall when fish are at their healthiest conditions.

