

Water and water features in your garden

A water feature in the garden looks attractive and provides a cooling, calming element in the landscape. The inclusion of a garden pond can have the additional benefit of providing a watering point for birds and other animals and a habitat for frogs and aquatic invertebrates.



Image: Water snowflake - *Nymphoides peltata*

A garden pond provides the potential for growing a range of plants, from edge species requiring moisture, such as Woolly Frogmouth (*Philydrum lanuginosum*), to wetland species and aquatic plants.



Many native wetland plants are very attractive, as well as providing good tadpole and water bug habitat. Some useful plants include rushes, ferns and aquatic plants like the Common Nardoo (*Marsilea drummondii*).

A variety of floating and emergent aquatic plants in garden ponds provide anchorage for frogs' eggs, and food for tadpoles. Surrounding and overhanging plants also provide a bridge for froglets moving from the water onto the land, and provide shade and protection from predators.

Don't forget though, that cane toads can be a real problem in ponds. Densely planting the pond edge with native sedges, rushes and grasses, will restrict cane toads from entering ponds and breeding. Frogs are better hoppers and are more able to clear these plantings.

Birds visiting your garden need a source of clean water to drink and bathe in. A pond can also be a useful birdbath, provided it has easy access, suitable cover and escape routes from lurking cats or other predators.



Many insects spend part of their life in an immature stage in the water. For example, a dragonfly spends most of its life as an underwater nymph, preying on pond inhabitants such as mosquito larvae. The hatched adults are also very effective predators of mosquitoes and flies. Hovering dragonflies in summer provide the opportunity for 'dragonfly watching', which can be as fascinating as bird watching!

A healthy garden pond stocked with native water life provides a great educational resource for children with dip nets, by providing many living examples of insect lifecycles and food webs. Be sure to return what you collect in the dip net, back to the pond so that you can continue watching progress in growth and changes in form.



Image: Woolly frogmouth - *Philydrum lanuginosum*