

Pond Plants  
By Laurel Rady  
UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County  
03/01/2022

Only certain types of plants thrive in an environment that includes deep water, moist soil, humidity, heat reflection, and are happiest with their roots submerged in water. Pond plants shade the water's surface, reduce algae growth, stabilize the pond's edges, supply oxygen and filtration, enhance property appeal, and provide habitat for fish and wildlife.

Many ponds include four types of water plants: bog plants, marginal plants, deep-water plants, and floating plants. Bog plants prefer continuously moist soil. Marginal plants have roots that can be submerged, but do not need to be. Deep-water plants need to grow in soil with their roots underwater. Floating plants get all their nutrients from the water, so they need no soil. They can be placed on the surface of the water after all other plants are incorporated. A reliable source of information for aquatic gardens can be found on the California Master Gardener Tip Sheet, Publication 8369, available at: <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/>

For the pond's edge, choose plants that will thrive in moist soil. Good options include Western blue-eyed grass, *Sisyrinchium bellum*, pink bog primrose, *Primula rosea "Gigas"*, Impatiens, *Impatiens walleriana*, Sierra shooting star, *Dodecatheon jeffreyi "Red Light"*, and calla lily species.

Choose plants that are suited to your climate zone. You can find your climate zone on the U.S. Department of Agriculture website, go to: <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov>. Determine if your pond site is situated in sun, full shade, or partial shade.

Water usually attracts wildlife. You may enjoy wildlife, such as birds, bees, and butterflies. However, your pond may also attract rats, raccoons, skunk, deer, toads, and frogs. Ponds may require maintenance to reduce algae growth, fix leaks, seasonal flooding, and clouded water. A nursery specializing in pond plants can give advice on the best location to site your pond or offer recommendations for an existing pond that has maintenance issues. For safety, depending on where you live, your pond may need to be fenced.

Large ponds can support permanent plantings in many climates. But small ponds in cold climates are not able to sustain most deep-water, submerged, and floating plants. Bring them indoors for the winter, or plan to buy new ones the following year. Certain water plants can become disastrously invasive in warm climates. Avoid illegal and invasive plants, as they can create serious problems on your property and in the surrounding environment. It is important to maintain the pond and keep it free of weed growth. Weeds are a mosquito breeding ground, give the water an unpleasant smell, and color, block the sunlight, and exhaust the oxygen necessary for fish.

Ponds are a lovely feature in a landscape, but they are not without work. Appraise how much time you are willing to work to maintain a pond. If a large pond has become a maintenance headache, decide if your pond should be downsized or if there are other ways of creating a water feature that is less maintenance.

Master Gardener classes are offered monthly throughout the county. You can find our class schedule at: [http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public\\_Education\\_Classes/?calendar=yes&g=56698](http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public_Education_Classes/?calendar=yes&g=56698), and recorded classes on many gardening topics here: [http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public\\_Education/Classes/](http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public_Education/Classes/).

The Sherwood Demonstration Garden is open Friday's and Saturday's from 9 a.m. -noon until March through October. Please check our website for more details

[https://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC\\_Master\\_Gardeners/Demonstration\\_Garden/](https://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/Demonstration_Garden/)

Mark your calendar for our annual plant sales in April! Edible plant sale: including fruit, veggies and herbs will be on Saturday, April 16, 2022 8:00AM · 2:00PM. Choose your favorite edibles and shop our incredible tomato selection grown and cared for locally by Master Gardener volunteers! The ornamental plant sale will take place on Saturday, April 30, 2022 8:00AM · 2:00PM. We will have a huge selection of trees, shrubs, grasses, succulents, native and perennial plants. Location: Sherwood Demonstration Garden 6699 Campus Drive, Placerville. <http://ucanr.edu/edcsale>

Have a gardening question? Master Gardeners are working hard to answer your questions. Leave a message on our office telephone: 530-621-5512 or use the "Ask a Master Gardener" option on our website: [mgeldorado.ucanr.edu](http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu). We will get back to you! Master Gardeners are also on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest.

For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. To sign up for notices and newsletters, see [http://ucanr.edu/master\\_gardener\\_e-news](http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news).