You don't need a pond or lots of space in order to grow aquatic plants — you just need a container and a selection of small-scale water plants. Pots are a brilliant way of adding water to your garden and they benefit birds and wildlife, too. Your container can be made from a variety of materials: glazed ceramic, metal, fibreglass, plastic or lined wood. The only requirements are that it can hold water and not be vulnerable to frost or ice. The following ponds in pots don't need a pump or filter, so you won't need to worry about rigging them up to a power source.

**Ponds in pots**

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**Sun-loving pond**

A fibreglass container is ideal for a pot pond as it has no drainage hole and is strong enough to withstand cold weather. It has been filled with a selection of plants for a sunny position, including some fragrant ones to encourage airborne wildlife to visit. The soft yellow-and-lilac colour scheme will provide interest all season through both foliage and an ever-changing flower display. The container needs to be at least 35cm deep.

**Nymphaea ‘Pygmaea Helvola’**

This miniature water lily will grow from the base of the container. The leaves provide some cover on the surface, which helps to control green algae. Lift the basket from the water to trim back if necessary.

**Houttuynia cordata ‘Chameleon’**

The foliage is more striking from spring to autumn than the small summer flowers. It can be fast-growing, but helps to control green algae. The strong, tall stems with showy black bar markings reach 120cm. This plant can remain untrimmed throughout winter and will only need minor attention in spring.

**Primula florindae**

The scent of this giant cowslip attracts pollinating insects such as bees and hoverflies. It flowers later in summer than the smaller cowslip, and has a continuation of drooping yellow flowers appearing over a long period.

**Myriophyllum spicatum**

Spike milfoil is a British native. A portion is submerged beneath the surface (out of view) of this pot to oxygenate the water.

**Veronica beccabunga**

The blue flowers appear from May to September. The leaves offer shade and shelter for any amphibians that climb in and will trail over the pot edge, softening the look. Trim back surplus stem growth and pot up rooted stem pieces in aquatic compost to make a fresh plant for another pot.

**Mentha cervina**

This member of the mint family is a thin-leaved, clump-forming plant that’s more suited to a container than the larger native, Mentha aquatica. Trim back the stems in autumn and it will shoot again next spring. Pollinators love the flowers.

**Iris versicolor**

The iris will be the first plant to flower in this pot, in May. Cut back the tall leaves in autumn so they don’t fall into the water and decay over winter, reducing the water quality.

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Shade-loving pond
A stunning focal point for all seasons, this fibreglass bowl contains shade-tolerant plants that offer interesting texture, foliage shape and seedheads. It’s ideal for brightening a shaded corner of the garden or even a balcony.

Pot size: 60cm diameter and 25cm deep
Position: shade, semi shade

Juncus ensifolius
The dark seedheads, held 30cm above the water, with soft rush-like foliage, make this a strong feature plant in this display. The seedheads appear in June and last until autumn.

Isolepis cernua
This native oxygenator is also a focal point in this combination. The delicate, arching, ‘flower’-like seedheads look good throughout the summer.

Cyperus involucratus
The tall, umbrella-shaped bracts provide the architectural backdrop. It will remain upright until spring, then trim it just above water level as the new shoots start to grow.

Ceratophyllum demersum
A portion of hornwort, a British native, is put loose into the water. It sends out runners in the summer, attract pollinating insects. The delicate, arching, ‘fibre optic’-like seedheads look good throughout the summer.

Myriophyllum spicatum
A miniature oxygenator, with new shoots that will root down into the water, making new plants.

Isolepis cernua
A British native, the leaves grow large than 20cm tall and will slowly form a dense clump.

Anemopsis californica
One of the best shade-tolerant flowering plants. The unusual blooms, which appear from June and have a honey fragrance in August, attract pollinating insects. It sends out runners in the summer with new shoots that will root down into the water, making new plants.

Equisetum scirpoides
This miniature foliage plant won’t grow larger than 20cm tall and will slowly form a dense clump.

Nymphaea ‘Pygmaea Rubra’
A stunning focal point for all seasons, the red bowl (left) and the granite bowl (right) have a honey fragrance in August, attract pollinating insects. The tall, umbrella-shaped bracts provide the architectural backdrop. The tall, umbrella-shaped bracts provide the architectural backdrop. It will remain upright until spring, then trim it just above water level as the new shoots start to grow.

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How to plant up and maintain a pond in a pot
- For round containers such as the red bowl (left) and the granite bowl (right), use a ring sold as a planting support that is approximately three quarters of the diameter of the pot (see above). This will hold the emergent pond plants in their baskets at the correct depth of water and will ensure that the plants are locked in position and not blown over by wind.
- The top of the plant baskets should sit 5cm below the water surface. Plant all plants in their baskets, with the exception of the two oxygenators Ceratophyllum demersum and Myriophyllum spicatum.
- Collect rainwater to fill and top up your container (tap water is fine, but may contain more mineral salts).
- Add an algae control to stop the water turning green; turn to a03 for our Best Buys.
- In autumn, remember to trim back the plants and remove falling leaves. Decaying foliage left in the water can lead to high nutrient levels next spring. You don’t want a compost heap in the base of the container.
- In a very cold winter, make sure you wrap the container in bubble wrap to avoid the water freezing – particularly if it contains a miniature water lily. When propagating plants for your ponds in pots, always use aquatic compost.
- Keep plants in their baskets
- Use a planting support ring to keep plants in place
- Fill up your pond with rainwater
- Add an algae control
- Push the baskets into the planting ring