



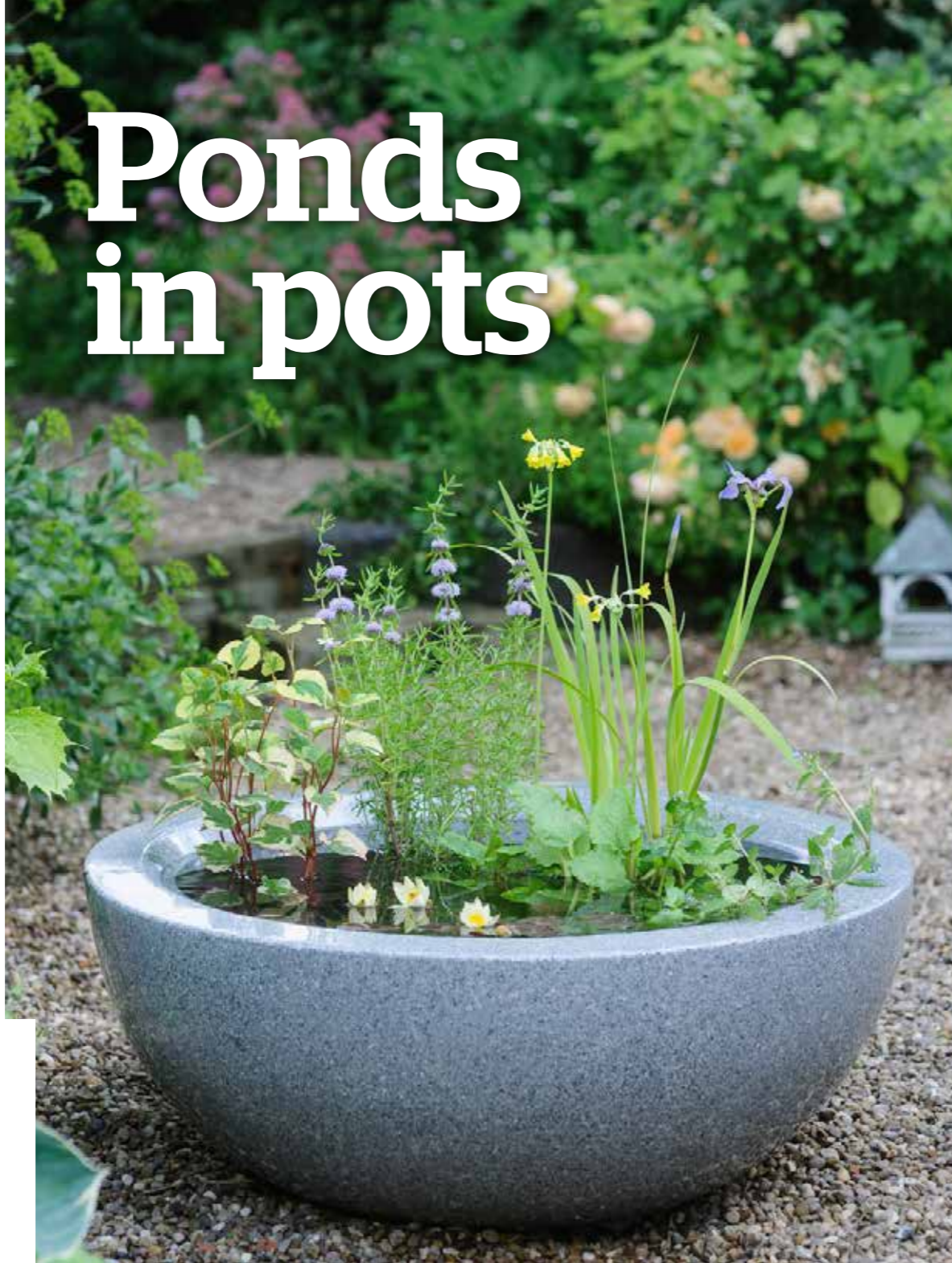
Linda Smith, aquatic plant specialist and owner of Waterside Nursery, shows you how to create four ponds in pots

Ponds in pots

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.

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.
Pot size: 80cm diameter and 35cm deep
Position: full sun



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 the temperature to remain constant, but the plant won't spread wider than 30cm.

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. Lift the basket from the water to trim back if necessary.

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.



Houttuynia cordata 'Chameleon'



Nymphaea 'Pygmaea Helvola'



Primula florindae



Mentha cervina



Veronica beccabunga



Iris versicolor

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.

Myriophyllum spicatum

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

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.

Bold and simple pond

This modern, reflective container creates a bold effect when teamed with a dramatic foliage plant. One large *Equisetum hyemale* has been put on an upturned basket so that the crown of the plant is covered by 5cm of water (avoid using bricks as they displace a large volume of water in a small container). Alternatively, you could use *Carex elata* 'Aurea' for a striking, arching yellow foliage effect in summer.
Pot size: 30cm wide and 45cm deep
Position: sun or shade



Equisetum hyemale

Equisetum hyemale

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.



Recycled pond

All kinds of objects can be recycled to make a container for aquatic plants. They must be watertight, so use a waterproof sealant if necessary. This unusual oval shape is ideal to plant up for a sunny corner, using miniature water lilies placed on the base of the container with an oxygenating plant. **Pot size:** 75cm long by 45cm wide and 25cm deep **Position:** full sun

Anagallis tenella

A British native, the leaves of this bog pimpernel grow beneath, as well as across, the water surface, so it can be used both as an oxygenating plant and for surface cover. It should be raised off the container base by putting it on an upturned basket so that the crown is covered by 5cm of water. It has such small leaves it won't need trimming. The little pink flowers are an added bonus.

Nymphaea 'Pygmaea Rubra'

Place the basket on the base of the container so that there's about 15cm of water above it. The plant will spread 30cm over the water surface. To get a succession of flowers, put

the container in a sunny spot and add a fertiliser tab to the plant basket in spring. Don't put a miniature water lily near a fountain – it won't like the constant splashing on its leaves.

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, 'fibre optic'-like seedheads look good throughout the summer.

Cyperus involucreatus

The tall, umbrella-shaped bracts provide the architectural backdrop. It will remain upright until spring, then trim it to 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 to find its own depth. It grows by taking nutrients directly from the water and will oxygenate through its fine leaves. It doesn't require potting.

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.



Use a planting support ring to keep plants in place



Keep plants in their baskets



Push the baskets into the planting ring



Fill up your pond with rainwater



Add an algae control

How to plant up and maintain a pond in a pot

- For round containers such as the red bowl (left) and the granite bowl (p46), 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).

- Every pond in a pot needs a combination of the following plants.

- Submerged oxygenating plants use up mineral salts and add oxygen to keep the water fresh.
- Surface-cover plants shade the

water and add stability to the water temperature.

- Emergent plants will provide colour in different seasons and interesting forms in the shape of foliage or flowers. Plants can be chosen to suit either sunny or shaded situations.

- Use an algae control to stop the water turning green; turn to p64 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 solid – particularly if it contains a miniature water lily.

- When propagating plants for your ponds in pots, always use aquatic compost.