

Winter Water Garden Care

Water gardens are extremely popular with home owners in the Tulsa area. To assure success with your water feature, maintenance must be provided before a winter freeze occurs.

The first step is to remove all debris from your pond. Remove algae, fish waste and dead leaves. This organic matter can break down into harmful chemicals, like hydrogen sulfide over the winter. These chemicals can prove deadly to fish and aquatic plants. Covering your pond with a net at the onset of fall leaf drop can be helpful. Be sure to remove the leaves before they sink into the pond. Another step is to cut off surface growth of underwater plants. Surface growth will die during the winter freezes, in turn polluting the water of the pond.

Reduce and eventually stop feeding pond fish. Fish metabolism is controlled by water temperature. In cool months fish don't require much protein. Excess protein consumed is excreted as ammonia. Due to reduced beneficial bacteria activity in cold periods ammonia can build up to the point it can cause fish death. With this in mind, in the fall reduce fish feeding and stop entirely when temperatures are below 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

If the pond freezes, do not break the ice. Chopping or pounding the ice will send shock waves that can cause fish death.