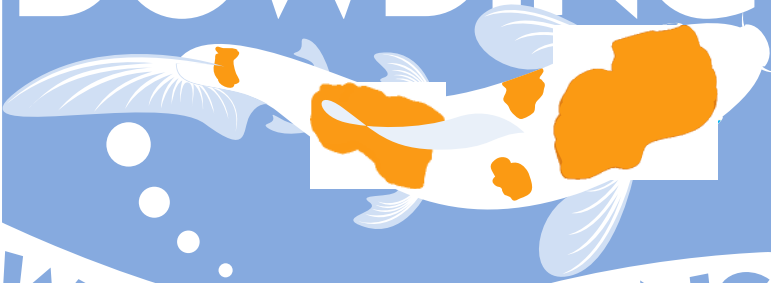


DOWDING



WATER GARDENS

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PREPARING THE POND FOR SPRING

Spring is the time life comes back to the frozen mass of water and earth that has been out of your reach over the winter.

Spring is also a good time for a pond cleaning if needed. Do you have sludge in the bottom of the pond? This can be from dead vegetation that will contribute to string algae later in the season. . Remove all plant material and keep them wet, including the leaves of the waterlily if they have started to grow. Divide and repot as needed. Pump some of the pond water into a “safe” container. Catch fish carefully. Spring is a very stressful time their immune system is not functioning at it’s peak now. Net the container and add an air stone if possible.

Pump out water and sludge. Hose off liner and stone. Pump out again. It is not necessary to scrub. Ideally we would like some of the beneficial bacteria left to seed the pond. When filling the pond remember to know your water source. Does it have chlorine?? If you are not on a well you will need to treat the water with dechlorinator. Some products will remove the chlorine as well as add the good bacteria into the pond. Before returning the fish to the pond check the temperature of the water. There should be no more than 5-10 degrees difference in temperature from the pond to the fish storage. Fish are very sensitive to sudden changes in temperature. Bring all hardy plants back up to their proper depth.

Now is the time to cut back all rushes and plants with hollow stems.

Check pump and hoses and return pump to lower level of pond. Caution: Returning the pump too deep too soon can super chill the water. Water will stratify into layers with the warmest water on the bottom. If returning it to the pond circulates the water be careful in watching for air temperatures. Avoid running the pond at night in early spring.

Check fish for signs of injury or illness. This is the most hazardous time for our fish’s health. As the water temperature rises water predators and diseases awaken from their dormancy before the immune system of the fish can counter balance their effect. Fish will naturally take care of most cold water ick, light fin fungus or rot, but if the symptoms persist the pond can be doctored.

DO NOT start to feed fish until the water is constantly above 55 degrees. Remember their digestive system isn’t working until the water warms up.

Please contact us if you have any further questions about the care of your pond.

Del & Holly Dowding

<http://www.dowdingwatergardens.ca>