

Pond at South Beck House

We didn't realize planning was required for the pond, as there has been one at the property for more than 20 years.

Our aim with the grounds around the house is to provide a variety of habitats to support the existing and attract new wildlife.

The pond is a large part of this. We put a lot of time, effort and research into the redesign and construction of the pond, which we believe will now be a permanent biodiverse wildlife habitat.

We felt it was important to repair the existing pond, due to the large amount of wildlife that has come to rely and breed in it over the years.

While we were researching the best construction methods, we found out how critical and much needed wildlife ponds are.

The RHS state that during the past century, nearly 70 percent of ponds have been lost from the UK countryside, and of all the habitats you can create to help wildlife, a pond is probably the most effective.

A well-designed and maintained pond is a haven for all sorts of plants, birds and animals. It is a complex habitat, full of algae and plants, scavengers, predators, herbivores, decomposers and parasites. Some species spend their whole life in the pond, while others use it for only part of their life cycle.

Water is essential to wildlife, and many creatures will make use of the pond.

For example:

- Frogs and newts have all been using the pond to breed.
- Common toads prefer deeper water bodies in which to breed, and have a strong migratory instinct, following the same route back to their ancestral breeding ponds each spring. These have been using the pond.
- Caddis flies, damselflies, dragonflies, mayflies, pond skaters, snails and water beetles breed in water.
- Support for waterfowl, including mallard ducks, moorhens and coots, which have already been visiting the pond
- Bats drink from open water surfaces, and many species also forage on emerging insects – such as caddis flies, crane flies, midges and mosquitoes. Creating and managing ponds to benefit bats could encourage greater numbers, and also higher species diversity of bats visiting a site.
- Birds such as swallows and house martins will pick off insects from above the water surface, and use muddy areas for nest building.

- The grey herons that are in the area have already visited, and will feed on fish and amphibians.
- Even grass snakes may be seen hunting.
- The pond may be visited by thirsty mammals like foxes and hedgehogs.
- Ponds can contain as many as 200 types of invertebrates.

Although nominally widespread across Britain, over the last 100 years Great Crested Newts have disappeared from many sites right across Europe, mainly as a result of pond loss and intensive agriculture.

In this sense, this iconic species sums up everything that has gone wrong for freshwater wildlife in Britain. Meaning garden ponds and water features have an increased importance for wildlife.

Pond location and construction

The ponds is located in the wooded area, and across into the paddock. It is not visible from anywhere outside the property due to the trees screening the property.

The pond was constructed using Bentomat clay panels with a soil covering. This was the most technical construction method, but will provide a natural and long-lasting environment.

The pond sides have a shallow slope which will provide a wide plant zone and safe entry and exit for any mammals that visit.

The depth of the pond is varied, but its deepest area is 2.5 metres, which is the advised depth of water that fish and invertebrates require to survive the winter safely.

Existing pond not holding water...



Newt removed from swimming pool...



Some pictures, still about a foot of water needed and then all the native marginal plants would be able to be planted. The planting is important for the wildlife as it provides cover, habitat and food.

Ducks on the pond



NYMNPA

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