

Spring Cleaning Instructions

These instructions are for a complete drain & clean. If you are just cleaning the filters this year, use only the “Preparing the Filters” instruction section.

Clean-out Checklist:

- Wading boots and old clothes you don't mind getting muddy
- Rubber gloves
- Discharge piping (enough to get the pond water where you want it)
- Pump (the pump from your skimmer with a makeshift screen of chicken wire or similar material can be used — something that keeps your fish, frogs, etc., from being sucked out)
- A high-pressure nozzle for your garden hose
- Container for your fish — something that you can cover is best so that they don't jump out!
- Aeration device for the temporary fish container
- Sharp pruner for root division
- Container of a de-chlorinator product

Getting Started:

To drain the pond and prepare for a clean-out, follow these easy steps:

- Connect the discharge pipe to the pump that you've decided to use
- Use some of the clean pond water to fill the container that will temporarily house the fish (not typically the deepest part, or water from a shallow shelf). We recommend saving as much of your healthy, clear water as possible. If the fish are to be left in the holding container longer than a few hours, then shade, predator cover, and aeration should be provided.
- Place the pump in the deepest part of the water garden
- Place the end of the discharge pipe so that the water drains into the surrounding landscape (be sure to maximize the water benefit by relocating the pipe 2 or 3 times to allow the water to seep into the ground and not flood the area) — this is a great time to deep-water any trees that might need it. The floor mulm makes great tree fertilizer, which can cost \$9 per gallon to purchase compost tea retail!
- When the water is down to about six inches deep in the pond, unplug the pump and net the fish into their temporary housing out of direct sunlight. If you have large Koi, be sure to aerate the water and put a cover on it!



Don't Overdo the Cleaning!

Once the fish and other critters are in their temporary holding tank, begin hosing down the inside of the pond. Don't try to scrub all the algae away! Some algae on the rocks will prove beneficial in re-developing your ecosystem. For an average-sized pond (10'x15'), this should take around 15 minutes.

Removing debris from your rocks and gravel is the next step, which is easy, if you work from the top down. Starting with the top shelves first, rinse the rocks and gravel, hand-picking any leaves or larger debris as you go – and don't forget to clean out those Koi caves. Continue to work your way down to the center of the pond. While you're doing this, the pump should continue to run. Any sediment or debris will be channeled to the deepest point, then removed and discharged by the pump. When the water starts cleaning up around the pump, you can unplug it.

Now that the tough stuff is done, you can trim and thin the aquatic plants. Be sure to thin from the roots!

Preparing the Filters:

Unplug the pump to clean the Biofalls® filter. Dain it and clean the mats and bags of lava rock by hosing them down until the water runs clear. Using a wet/dry vac, clean out the filter box. Plug the pump back in.

If you have a skimmer, use the pump to drain the water out and then hose it down. If you're not draining the entire pond, then place a water-proof barrier of some kind in front of the skimmer and allow your pond pump to draw down the water. This can be as simple as a piece of stiff cardboard wrapped in a plastic trash bag.

With the water drawn down, and the pond pump still running, use a wet/dry shop vac to remove mud and accumulated debris from around the pump. Then remove the skimmer barrier and listen for your stream to begin anew.



Returning the Fish:

Now that the clean-out is done, re-fill the pond with the reserved water from the fish holding tank until the water in the holding tank is just enough to keep the fish. Continue filling the pond with a hose if necessary.

Once your pond is half full, you can prepare to reintroduce your fish and plants as follows:

- If you're on City water, and your temporary holding tank held less than half of your pond water, use a de-chlorinator product to neutralize chlorine, chloramines, ammonia, and heavy metals to render the water fish-safe.
- Make sure the water in the pond and the water in the holding tank are the same temperature before you move the fish back into their home. They're going to be a little skittish, but they'll get over it and quickly start foraging their freshly disturbed home.
- Re-connect your pump, plug it in, and you're ready for Spring and Summer!
- Clean up and have a tall one next to your pond!