

Re: Size of pond for ducks?

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.agriculture.poultry/2008-12/msg00017.html>

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 - *Date:* Wed, 03 Dec 2008 23:18:32 +1300
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Jack Crenshaw wrote:

A.Lee wrote:

I'm debating whether to dig a pond in my garden for my ducks. I've currently got 5, 3 aylesburys and 2 runners. None are big water fans, though they do occasionally have a splash in the baby bath I have in the garden.

If I dig a pond, firstly, how deep should it be?
Secondly, will it get stagnant?

The baby bath has to be cleaned at least once a week, as the water gets muddy, and very smelly.

That is my main concern – I don't want a stagnant pool in my garden, so I presume it is not a case of just digging a hole, lining it, then filling with water?

Thanks for any thoughts
Alan.

Everyone I know who keeps ducks, relies on the tried-and-true baby wading pond. I used the blue ones (don't know why they're always blue!?!). Yes, they do get smelly and need frequent cleaning, and yes, there can be a problem with draiage in some areas. but the other options are challenges, also.

I started with one of those gorden ponds — about 3x4 feet, from Home Depot. Kept it clean by the simple approach of running water through it. Worked fairly well, but used a LOT of water, and kept part of my yard constantly wet.

My most ambitious attempt was a 30' diameter pond with vinyl liner. I had a fountain and waterfall for aeration, and a really elaborate, swimming-pool-quality sand filter. They ducks absolutely LOVED it. But I spent all weekend cleaning filters, and there were constant problems. Ducks have down, and they pluck at it constantly. The down gets into the filters, pickup hoses, pumps, and fountains, and must be cleaned regularly.

That first pond, I hoped to have a closed ecological system. I put water plants like hyacinths and grasses in the water, and fish and snails to help clean things. In a week, the ducks had eaten everything — grass, hyscinths, fish, and snails. So much for THAT idea.

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Since then, I've tried many ideas; none worked. If you use a vinyl pond or lining, water can get under it and eat away the supporting soil. If you don't, all your water drains away. If you use filtering, it clogs.

I've talked to guys who build koi ponds, and they assure me that they can build a pond that works. But their prices start at around \$10,000. And even then, I'm not sure that their koi filters can clean handle duck poop/

If you decide to dig a pond anyhow, make it deep -- deep enough so the poop can settle way down. Use clay to line it, and sand in the bottom. Get a pump that won't clog (sump pump, maybe?), and move lots of water around. A waterfall or aerator would help.

One thing I did learn: The pump pickup can't be at the bottom, as you might think. The koi-pond guys use a floating pickup that pulls the water right off the surface.

They also use a UV sterilizer. I guess that might help with the odor.

Or, just get a bunch of baby wading pools <g>.

Jack

Ducks amaze me. They shit 3 times their own body weight, mostly on the lawn, and they can turn clean water into a replica of a malfunctioning septic tank quicker than you can say knife.

No ducks here except the wild mallards who come and go and haven't been coming as much since I turned hardass about feeding them. Pitiless, me. Except for Mrs Hoppy who was looking terrible when she turned up again a few weeks ago. A couple of times I heard her quacking loudly and chased a rapist drake away from the poor creature. Her foot was so lame she can't have been getting food and her rear end was messy from sitting in her own poo. I started feeding her and she started looking better. Her partner, sweetly, stood back and let her eat whatever I put down. Then she became bolder. Took food out of my hand and a few days later so did her companion. Then they took to trundling into the conservatory in case the cats had dropped some cat biscuits. She's still very lame but not as bad as she was, perhaps because being better fed she is getting stronger.

Yesterday, busy, I threw some wheat towards Mrs Hoppy who looked a bit suspicious of my intentions, only to walk round the shed corner and see Mrs Hoppy the real one. Definitely Mrs H the First, because when she saw me she lurched towards me.

I was telling a friend from over the valley this afternoon and he said. "You know how they get lame?"

It's from *ducking* under the feet of other animals for food! He throws bread to the assortment of chooks, turkeys geese, goats and the old neighbour's old draft horse who lives at his place now, and the mallards race around trying to grab pieces where they can. He said he'd seen old Bert's horse stand on a duck's foot once, and sometimes it happens with the sheep and goats.

A L P

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