



The Great Pond Challenge

If you are keen to provide a home for wildlife or protect our valuable biodiversity, creating a pond is one of the best things that you can do. A healthy garden pond is likely to support a greater range of wildlife than any other feature in your school or home garden.

Unfortunately ponds have been declining rapidly with nearly 70% of all countryside ponds being lost over the last century in the UK, including in many schools.

Ponds can come in all shapes and sizes and can even be as small as a washing up bowl! All have value for wildlife and provide a fantastic learning opportunity for pupils.

There is a great resource linked to pond creation and maintenance at <http://wildaboutgardens.org.uk>



Your challenge is to create your own school pond, if you don't already have one. This doesn't have to be enormous, especially if you don't have much space in your grounds. Spend some time researching the best shape and size ponds for wildlife and the types of plants that would be good to include. Maybe you could have several mini-ponds and compare the wildlife found in each one.

You might want to invite parents in to help or local businesses. Whatever you do, just be wary of introducing fish; they are not going to help the wildlife as they will eat most of it!

If you already have a pond, perhaps you could investigate how healthy it is by completing the Opal biodiversity survey found at www.opalexplornature.org/watersurvey There are also some useful ID charts free to download and you can share your results once complete for a bit of citizen science.

Extension: Do you know how many families have a pond at home? Perhaps you could create a survey to find out and try and encourage creation of home garden ponds. Maybe a competition for the best upcycled pond creation in a home garden or a photo competition to see different wildlife found around a pond!

You could also create a scrap book or e-book showing wildlife found in your pond each year; does it increase, stay the same or change? Is it the same as other ponds in the area?

Please let us know if you take part in a challenge by emailing eco-schools@keepwalestidy.cymru or tweeting @EcoSchoolsWales