

Nature Box - Garden Ponds



The best time to create a small garden pond is right now - or you might change your mind.

Building a pond is not difficult and there is plenty of useful advice around; and the return a pond brings in terms of wildlife is amazing - the creatures just come. Water boatmen will soon be 'rowing' across your pond, pond skaters and maybe even whirligigs, moving like bumper cars but never colliding; with these creatures defying logic with their surface tension trickery.

Frogs may soon discover your pond with frog spawn to follow in early February if you're lucky. Although our own healthy collection of newts seemingly polished off all of last spring's tadpoles. Still, they have to eat and newts are pretty cool too.

Dragonflies and damselflies are the other great attraction. Large red damsels often appear first and the yellow and green southern hawker - the most common large dragonfly here - often come close to check you out. Both are great colonisers of small garden ponds. Watching them lay eggs in early summer is a treat; and their offspring can be spotted climbing up stemmed pond plants, having spent several years beneath the surface as nymphs. Best to avoid adding fish if you want to attract diversity.

And the fun doesn't stop there: with hedgehogs, wood mice and other small rodents also visiting to enjoying a night time drink.

Village pond insect sightings: a Banded Demoiselle, Broad-bodied Chasers, an Emperor dragonfly, Red Damsels; and lots of tiny froglets spotted in early June. Hooray! Just as well, given froglets will be on the menu of many other creatures.

If you'd like to contribute to Nature Box or report interesting local sightings please speak to or email Bob Topp at willerseynaturebox@gmail.com