

Gardening tips:

Building your first water garden

Welcome to the fastest growing outdoor past-time in Canada.

According to Scott Rhodes, product manager for Laguna, a manufacturer and distributor of pond products based in Montreal, building a water garden is certainly something you can do yourself, provided you keep these few tips in mind:

- First, plan ahead by researching your project. There are many books and magazines on building water gardens and ponds.

- You first major decision is whether you'll have a pre-formed or liner-type pond. Pre-formed ponds are available in a variety of shapes and sizes, typically up to 300 U.S. gallons. The advantage here is that you simply dig a hole and insert the ready-built basin.

With liner-type ponds, you need to purchase a special flexible liner that goes over the hole and serves as the substrate material between the soil and the pond water. The benefit here is that you can build larger ponds and tailor the shape to suit your needs.

- Another important factor to consider is location. For instance, a pond should enjoy some shade as well as sunlight. And always ensure that there is access to electrical sources.

- The next step: pond equipment. Pond water should always be circulated in order to keep it healthy and life-sustaining (more about fish and plants later).

This is where water pumps come in. They circulate water and provide features such as fountains and waterfalls. The size of the pump depends on many factors, including how much water will be in the pond and how high you want your fountain and waterfall to be. For example, large pumps with high flow rates will move more water faster and create higher fountains and waterfalls.

- Now, about those fish and plants. If you're going to have some in the pond, you need to keep the water healthy. Water circulation is important, but you also need a filter to remove debris and biologically break down

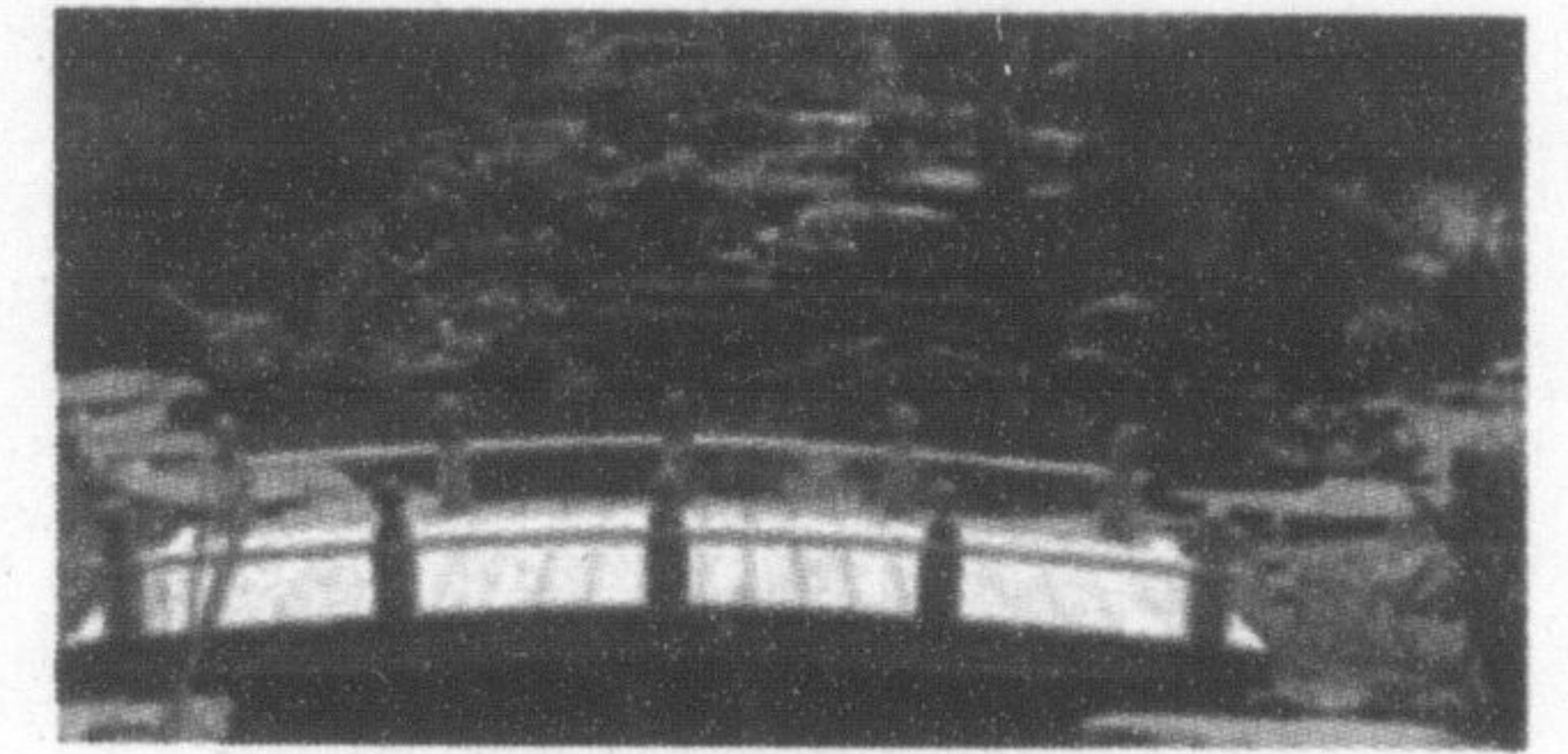
harmful toxins and purify water.

- Filters come in many sizes and perform a variety of functions. Some skim off debris, while others also perform biological and chemical cleaning. Some models are submersible, while others are installed outside the pond. In all cases, a water pump must be connected to one so that water passes through it and is cleansed by the filter.

Your best resources for detailed information are retailers specializing

in water gardens. For more expert advice and tips on building a pond and Laguna pond products visit www.hagen.com.

- News Canada



Arming yourself for the mosquito wars

The battle of the bugs season is upon us and it's time to arm yourselves for the battle.

Mosquitoes are prolific breeders, with hundreds and thousands "born" each day during peak times. The good news is there are new environmentally safe and effective ways to keep mosquitoes at bay and help reclaim living and/or recreational space.

While the trusty ultraviolet or black light bug zappers are a popular choice, few realize that the germs and bacteria carried by the mosquitoes - including West Nile virus - can be splattered up to six feet. In addition, their "kill rate" is relatively low.

AquaBac (www.afaenvironment.com), an environmentally safe larvicide that uses natural bacteria, helps homeowners stop mosquitoes before they start. Simply sprinkle it in popular breeding grounds such as eaves troughs and rain barrels (mosquitoes love standing water) to destroy mosquito larvae before they develop into full-fledged adulthood.

If you didn't catch them in time, BugEater (www.nobugbites.com), a new technology from Australia designed to break the breeding cycle, can destroy mosquitoes - and other biting insects - more safely, and at a much more impressive rate than zappers. For use indoors or outdoors, the BugEater uses a black light to attract insects which are then blown down into a tray of biologically safe solution where they drown.

While the battle against mosquitoes

is never-ending, using safe and effective alternatives that have proven to keep infestations at bay is worth the effort.

- News Canada

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IN THE GARDEN
By Colleen Moodie
Proud Owner, Daisy Maids - Milton

The topic this week is shrubs and roses:

PRUNING: As a general rule, prune for health of the shrub or rose first. Remove any dead, diseased, or crossing branches as soon as you discover them. Prune for aesthetics second. With few exceptions, flowering shrubs should be pruned shortly after they have finished flowering. In most cases, pruning before the shrub flowers i.e. late spring, will remove the tips which the flowers would have appeared on.

Daisy Maids - Milton can advise you regarding the proper pruning of your shrubs and roses.

DISEASES AND INSECTS: (SHRUBS) Periodically check shrubs for signs of disease and insects. If you notice something is amiss act immediately. In the case of insects, a small shrub can become defoliated in a matter of days. Diseases can spread extremely quickly.

ROSES: Check roses for signs of diseases such as black spot, which is very common. Black spot looks just like it sounds - black blotchy marks with yellow edges will appear on the leaves of affected roses. Aphids are small insects (green, black, orange or red) that usually feed on the sap of tender young shoots. They secrete a sticky honeydew which may become covered in a black fungus. Leaves may become distorted and failure of infested buds to open may occur. Daisy Maids - Milton checks all of the plants in your garden for signs of disease and insects as part of our maintenance program. We can advise the best course of action for these types of problems in your garden.

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