



Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

Johnson's Garden Talk

September/October
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Fall Water Gardening

Scott Davies, West 13th Store Manager & KS Certified Nursery Professional

With cooler fall weather upon us, there are a few changes to be made in maintaining your water garden. Water temperatures begin to drop which causes plant and fish growth to slow down. In addition, trees start dropping their leaves and many of them end up in the pond. With these conditions in mind, let's look at how to keep your pond clean, clear and healthy.

At this time of year, fish metabolism slows down due to cooler water. Switch to Spring/Autumn Food by Aquarium Pharmaceuticals for a lower protein diet to reduce ammonia and murky water problems and to give you more colorful fish. If you notice infections on the fish, a salt bath may be just the cure. Pond Salt is not table salt. It is a natural sea salt that can be added to the pond or given as a salt bath. Pond Salt helps reduce stress in fish, improve gill function, as well as eradicate external parasites.

Cooler water temperatures also create a more favorable environment for string algae to take off. String algae is a long fibrous moss-like algae that can grow throughout the pond, especially in the cooler times of the year. The beneficial bacteria that keeps much of it under control during the summer begins to die off allowing the string algae to blossom. A new product for us this year, S.A.B. (*String Algae Buster*), is just the right stuff to prevent the string algae from taking off or to get it under control. S.A.B. contains natural enzymes and bacteria that are safe for fish and plants. These beneficial microbes rob the string algae of nutrients it needs to grow and keeps the algae from developing. Application rates are based on the size of the pond and made on a regular schedule throughout fall, winter and spring.

If falling leaves are a problem, try placing a garden net over the pond. The netting, which comes in different sizes, catches most of the leaves before they enter the water and prevents much of the sludge from accumulating. It's still a good practice to apply MICROBE-LIFT® Autumn Prep to the pond to reduce sludge build up during the fall and winter months when dead leaves and other organic debris make their way into the pond.

Stop fertilizing water plants if you haven't done so already. This allows plants to go dormant naturally for the winter.

With a few simple changes this fall, you'll have healthy plants and fish and your pond will be crystal clear throughout the fall and winter. If you have questions about building or maintaining a water garden, stop by any of our three locations. ■