

Preparing your pond for winter 2

September is a nice time for ponds. With the shorter days and cooler nights, the pond's water magically becomes very clear and string algae will often disappear completely. This is when it becomes evident that your fish were having fun in the spring and now you can see the baby fish darting around. These are usually dark brown or black, but many will color up when they get larger.



It's a good idea to keep an eye on the water temperature, so that you know when to switch to a higher carbohydrate diet. The basic rule is to feed spring and fall food when the water temperature is below 10 degrees Celsius. You should stop feeding altogether when the temperature goes below 5 degrees. This is because fish are cold blooded animals and their digestive enzymes just don't work below that temperature.

I usually turn off my UV light at this time of the year. This saves on the life of the bulbs, which tend to be rather pricy. Even though the bulb will still be visibly glowing, it no longer emits enough radiation

to kill the green algae. They are usually good for two seasons, but often you can get a third year out of them if you turn them off in early September. The manufacturers rate the bulbs for so many hours, so you can do the math to figure out when it expires, or simply replace the bulb when it is not keeping your water clear anymore. By the way, it is not a good idea to try to extend its lifespan by turning it off at night.

Other than deadheading and removing older yellowing leaves from the plants, and doing the regular filter cleaning your pond has few demands, except for your time to sit and enjoy it. The temperature outside is perfect, with clear skies and no smoke. It is neither too hot nor too cold. The kids are back to their regular routine; Ironman is finished and all the 'company' has gone back home. This leaves you a few golden weeks to settle before it is time to prepare your pond for winter.