



Like the rest of your landscape, your water feature requires a bit of maintenance to ensure long-lasting beauty and value. Follow these steps for fall and winter care:

- In the fall, clean up fallen leaves and other debris. Consider netting.**
While your pond skimmer will catch many fallen leaves, the heavy volume that fall brings means that you'll need to help out a bit. Use a net to remove the bulk of the leaves that the skimmer misses—don't worry about catching every leaf. You might also consider installing pond netting until the bulk of the leaves have fallen. (Note: Tier One Landscape has found netting to be useful during winter months as well; netting is an easy way to prevent your pond from becoming a sushi buffet for local wildlife.)
- Perform a comprehensive water test.**
Ensure current conditions are good before beginning to winterize.
- Clean your skimmer, filter, and pump.**
Much like you do in the spring, remove the filter media, then remove the dirty water and debris at the bottom of the filter box. Rinse the filter media thoroughly and put it all back in place. Rinse out your skimmer and pump.
- Stop feeding fish when water temperature falls to a consistent 50° Fahrenheit.**
You may start using a low-temperature fish food formulation at 65°. Fish will go into full hibernation at 40°.
- Stop fertilizing aquatic plants after first frost and prepare them for winter.**
Continue to remove dead and yellowed leaves. Hardy bog and marginal plants should be trimmed to 2 inches above water level. Hardy lilies should be cut back to 2 to 3 inches above the plant base and placed in the deepest part of the pond.
- Winterize your pump.**
You may run your pump throughout the winter, provided it is strong enough to maintain a perpetual hole in the ice. This will result in beautiful ice sculptures along any streams or waterfalls. Be very careful, however, as running your waterfall and streams throughout the winter may result in ice build-ups that channel water out of your pond. In the event of an ice build-up, shut down your pump, submerge it in a bucket of water, and store it in a frost-free area for the remainder of the extremely cold months.
- Prepare fish for winter months with a de-icer and aerator.**
Ponds that are 18 inches or deeper can over-winter fish. Use a de-icer to prevent your pond from freezing completely, and use a pump or aerator to ensure proper oxygen levels and prevent harmful gas build-up all winter long. Ensure the pump or aerator is strong enough to keep a perpetual open hole in the ice. You may also want to insulate the air line to prevent any condensation from freezing and causing a blockage. Do not place the aerator on the bottom of the pond.
- Add cold-weather bacteria to prevent water quality problems.**
To help eliminate decaying organic matter, add Aquascape™ AquaClearer™ Extreme Cold Water until the water temperature reaches a consistent 50°.
- Monitor ice and aeration throughout the cold weather months.**
When the temperature gets extremely cold, keep an eye on your pond to ensure that the open hole remains open. If the hole closes over with ice during a particularly cold snap, use a shovel or hot water to reopen the hole.