

Choosing a Fountain for the Garden Pond

Contributed by Philip Swindells

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The more adventurous may wish to choose fancy spray patterns. These are simply achieved by changing the fountain spray attachment on the submersible pump. There are many different fountain spray configurations. Some have names like lily or tulip, which describe the kind of aerial patterns of water that are produced.

The introduction of a fountain unfortunately precludes the growing of waterlilies and similar floating leafed plants in close proximity. These dislike the turbulence of the water, and so in the small pond a fountain excludes the growing of all aquatic plants, except submerged oxygenating subjects and marginal aquatics such as irises, reeds and rushes.

However, a fountain does bring benefits to ornamental fish, especially on hot summer days. As it falls, the water picks up oxygen from the air, which is ultimately of benefit to the fish. On the other hand it should be realized that such water movement will also bring considerable evaporation and water loss, so the pond will require regular topping up.

With many conventional fountains it is possible to add illumination. Most are self-contained units that can provide a night-time spectacular, but during the day-time function as a normal fountain. It is also possible to add a simple underwater spotlight to up-light an ordinary fountain. Such lights are sealed in a waterproof body and are often available in different colors.

For the more sophisticated gardener there are color changers that can be attached to a pump just below water level in order to produce a changing pattern of colors. This is achieved with a specially manufactured revolving disc that incorporates a variety of colored segments that automatically change the color of the fountain.

It is also possible to automatically change spray patterns. As many as eighteen spray patterns are available in a set sequence, each lasting for up to twenty seconds. Such fittings are available for both submersible and surface pumps, the more powerful the pump, the higher and wider the spray pattern. Recent innovation has also brought to the home garden the fountain with music that is synchronized with the spray patterns; the latest in sophistication.

Philip Swindells has over 40 years gardening experience. A former botanical garden curator and an international horticultural consultant, he has worked extensively in the UK, North America, the Middle East and Australia. The Author of more than 50 gardening books, he has been awarded a Quill and Trowel Award by the Garden Writers' Association of America. He is also a former UK Garden Writer of the Year. He is currently editor of www.internationalwatergardener.com