



Caring for your pond

Having created your ideal pond, there are a few simple things you need to do to keep it in top condition. A well cared for pond is easier to look after, and will have a healthy population of fish, plants and wildlife. To help make looking after your pond as easy as possible, the **TetraPond** range offers a wide selection of effective and easy-to-use foods, care products and equipment. Plus, because we invest more in research and testing than any other company, you can be confident that **TetraPond** is the best choice for your pond.

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Fish care

Provided your pond is well cared for, the fish will generally remain healthy and happy. Fish normally only get sick when there is a problem with the water, which is easily avoidable by following the advice in this and other **Tetra** information brochures.

Therefore, the most important part of caring for your fish is ensuring they receive a good quality diet.

Like all animals, fish require a balanced diet to provide them with nutrients and energy. Although ponds contain some natural food, it is insufficient to meet all of their dietary needs. It is therefore important to feed fish with a good quality food, to keep them healthy and in top condition.

TetraPond foods will not only supply fish with the nutrients they need for health they are also efficiently digested and utilised, leading to lower waste production. This is important, as dissolved and solid wastes reduce the quality of pond water, and encourages algae to grow. For a cleaner, clearer pond, that is easier to look after, and in which the fish are healthier, feeding a good quality food is essential.

TetraPond Sticks or Pellets provide an ideal staple diet for most fish, although variety can be increased by offering TetraPond Variety Sticks. In the winter it is important to feed fish with a specially formulated diet, such as TetraPond Wheatgerm Sticks, which is readily digested at low temperatures. In the summer, growth rates can be improved by feeding TetraPond Koi Sticks Growth. For more information on feeding pond fish, and different TetraPond foods, see our 'Feeding your Pond Fish' brochure.



- Rigorously tested by our independently accredited laboratories, to guarantee a healthy, balanced diet.
- Formulated to minimise waste production, for cleaner, clearer water, and reduced maintenance.
- Use a special manufacturing process that results in sticks that soften quickly, making them easier to eat.
- Use special ingredients to support a healthy immune system and keep your fish healthy.





Plant care

Once you have planted your pond initially (see our 'Creating a Garden Pond' brochure), it is relatively easy to keep pond plants in good condition.



Towards the end of the season, in late autumn, you should cut back dying plant growth to just a few inches. This prevents dead material falling into the pond and polluting it. Submerged plants should also be trimmed back so they do not reach the surface, and many floating plants will need removing altogether.

During the season, oxygenating and floating plants may need thinning out to control their growth. As a general rule, do not allow them to cover more than a third to one half of the pond. By cutting them back and allowing them to grow again, you are ensuring that there is a steady removal of nutrients from the water, which would otherwise encourage algae.

Fertilising

Oxygenating and floating plants take nutrients up from the water. Like all plants, they need a good supply of these nutrients to keep them healthy and growing well. Over time, certain nutrients will be depleted, and require replenishment. **TetraPond PlantaMin** is a liquid fertiliser that adds important nutrients to the water, to keep plants in top condition. It does not contain additional nitrate and phosphate, so will not encourage algae. It should be added regularly to provide an ideal environment for submerged and floating plants.

Re-potting

Potted pond plants rely on their planting medium for nutrients. This will become nutrient-poor over time,



and therefore requires replacing every so often. Also, as plants outgrow their baskets, they will need re-housing.

Spring/early summer is an ideal time for re-potting pond plants. Although you should check the care information for individual plants, most plants can be re-potted as follows:

- Remove the plant from its basket and wash off excess soil.
- 2 Cut back excess root growth, and if necessary divide the plant with a strong knife.
- 3 Re-pot into a pond planting basket, lined with hessian and filled with aquatic compost.

See our 'Creating a Garden Pond' brochure for more information on potting pond plants.

Never discard unwanted plants or plant fragments into the wild. Always dispose of them carefully, or put them on the compost heap.





Equipment care

Properly functioning equipment is essential for good water quality and a healthy pond. The exact care requirements for different items of equipment will be explained in the instructions, so here we present only the most important things to consider.

Pump care

Depending on the model of pump, it may contain a pre-filter (usually a sponge) to protect it from particles of solid waste that could damage its moving parts. These will need occasional cleaning, according to how much solid waste is in the pond. This is usually a very simple process, and should only take a few minutes. The filter can be rinsed with the hose and then placed back into the pump.

It may also be necessary to clean the moving parts of the pump from time to time. In particular, the impeller may become dirty, or covered in limescale, which will cause it to slow down and ultimately break. It is therefore good practice to check the impeller and other moving parts when you clean the pre-filter.

Fountain Pump

TetraPond pumps are designed to clog less frequently, thereby reducing maintenance. For the ultimate in low-maintenance, **TetraPond CFP** debrishandling pumps are able to process solids up to 10mm in size, making them ideal for watercourses and filter systems.

Filter care

If the biological media in the filter becomes very dirty, the beneficial bacteria it contains will not function properly. In addition, a dirty filter will reduce flow rates and not maintain such good water quality or clarity. It is therefore important to clean the filter media as and when necessary.

The mechanical media (usually sponges or brushes) can be removed and washed with a hose. Alternatively, **TetraPond** filters come with automatic cleaning mechanisms, to make this easier.

Biological media (usually plastic rings or porous rocks) must never come



TetraPond CFP Filter Pump

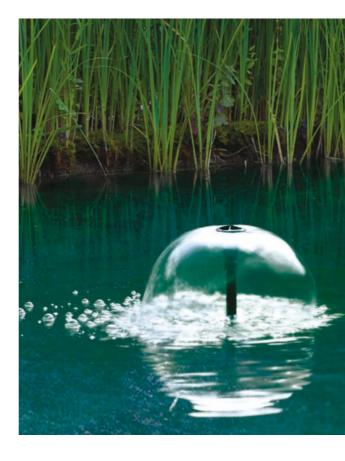
into contact with mains water, as the chlorine content will kill any beneficial bacteria. Instead, the media should be removed and rinsed in a bucket of pond water. Again, **TetraPond** filters with their automatic cleaning mechanisms make this process easier.

Ultraviolet Clarifier care

Every once in a while it is a good idea to check that the quartz sleeve inside the UVC is not covered in limescale. If it is, follow the cleaning instructions carefully. Never access the UVC when it is switched on, as the light it emits is damaging to eyes.

In addition, at the start of the season it is a good idea to replace the bulb in your UVC. Most have a life-span of around 6 months to 1 year, and even if they still light up will not be emitting sufficient ultraviolet light to control green water.

For more information on equipment, see our 'Pond Equipment' brochure.





Controlling algae

If allowed to get out of control, algae can spoil the appearance of a pond, and affect water quality. It is therefore important to take measures to prevent it establishing itself, and to treat early if it appears.

The types of algae present in garden ponds cause two common problems – green water and blanketweed. Green water is caused by the presence of microscopic algae suspended in the water column, whereas blanketweed is a general term given to stringy, filamentous algae.



To flourish, algae require warmth, light, and nutrients, and this is the key to preventing their growth. Although we can't do much about temperature, the amount of light reaching the pond can be controlled. A good planting scheme, using taller marginals and floating plants (see our 'Creating a Garden Pond' brochure), will reduce the amount of light hitting the pond. In addition, attractive features such as pergolas can be used to further reduce light levels.

Plants are also extremely good at removing nutrients from the water, and therefore providing some natural algae control. Floating plants and oxygenators are especially suitable.

Nutrient levels can also be minimised by feeding **TetraPond** food. This helps to reduce the input of phosphate and nitrate into the water, which are key promoters of algae growth.

Preventing the accumulation of large quantities of organic matter on the base of the pond is also helpful. A good filter system will help, and if necessary the occasional use of a pond vacuum might be beneficial.

Further nutrient control can be achieved by adding **TetraPond PhosphateMinus** to the water, to reduce and control phosphate levels. By controlling this important nutrient, it helps to prevent the growth of algae. **TetraPond AlgoFin*** is also an excellent preventative measure for algae, as well as being the ideal treatment for when it is already there.







Clearing algae

If you do experience green water or blanketweed, there are a number of things you can do to clear it. For green water, **TetraPond AlgoRem** works within hours to clear the water, clumping the algae together so it can be removed manually or by the filter. If you have repeated problems, it may be worth adding a **TetraPond ultraviolet clarifier** to the filter system, as this will permanently keep the water clear and green-free.

With blanketweed, it is important to manually remove as much as possible before treatment. This is because large quantities of decaying algae will pollute the pond water. **TetraPond AlgoFin*** can then be used to reduce its growth.

Having cleared the pond, it is important to follow the tips for preventing algae, to stop it returning.

*Use biocides safely. Always read the label and product information before use.

When used as directed, all TetraPond treatments and care products are safe for fish, plants, and wildlife, including animals drinking from the pond.





Predators

As well as attracting lots of interesting wildlife to the garden, ponds may also get the attention of more unwelcome visitors. If you do have a problem with predators, there are a few things you can do to protect your fish.

Types of predator

There are a range of native animals that could potentially pose a threat to your fish, including herons, cats, foxes, crows, cormorants and mink. However, by far the most common predators are herons, and to a lesser extent, cats. All ponds are at risk from predators so it is wise to take some preventative measures to avoid losing any of your fish. Even if they are unsuccessful at catching your fish, these attacks will unnerve them and deter them from coming to the surface where they can be seen.

Protecting your pond from herons

A number of methods have been employed to reduce the risk of predation, the most controversial of which is the use of a plastic heron. Although many claim that it works, it is perhaps the least effective method of protection. Over time, herons may get used to the plastic replica, and quite happily set down beside it to feed. Putting a net over the pond, or a fence around it, is a far more effective means of protection. The more comprehensively you cover the pond, the less likely it is that a heron will get to it. However, too much

Herons

a pond. Even if they fail to catch a fish, their beaks are capable of inflicting nasty puncture wounds, which can quickly become infected. Herons are protected by law (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981), and it is illegal to kill or injure them. In any case, it would be pointless killing one, as a new heron would soon replace it. Therefore, it is necessary to prevent them from getting close enough to the fish to catch them. Herons tend to feed predominantly during the first few hours of the day, before we are up and about. If all is quiet they may also return later on in the evening. They often go unnoticed, the only sign of their presence being a pond full of spooked fish that are reluctant to rise to the surface. During the summer, numbers of herons, and consequently the demand for food, may increase, due to the presence of newly fledged juveniles. The nesting period (which may last into March and April), also creates an extra demand for food, as parents have young to feed.

The Grey Heron (*Ardea cinera*) poses the greatest threat to pond fish, and also frogs. An adult can consume 350g of fish a day (700g if it has young to feed), and is quite capable of rapidly emptying

netting can detract from the pond's appearance. If you don't want to put a net over the pond, then constructing a fence around it is also effective. This is because, in most cases, herons will land on the ground, before walking to the pond to feed. A fence made from netting, about 90cm (3ft) high, and placed about 60cm (2ft) from the edge of the pond, will serve to deter most attacks. If this is still too obtrusive, you can make the fence out of pieces of twine, placed at 15cm (6in) intervals to a height of 60 – 90cm (2 – 3ft).

Preventing other predators

Cats and foxes can also be kept out of the pond with nets and fences, although they will generally have to be sturdier and more carefully constructed, to ensure there are no holes or areas they can get through.

Fences made of twine are far less appropriate where such predators are active, and it may be that some form of netting is the only option. Having a good growth of marginal plants around the pond will make life harder for cats and foxes, as will the use of rocks around the edge. These rocks should be uneven and "wobbly", as this is said to help deter cats. General measures of protection, which also apply to herons, involve creating plenty of hiding places for your fish. This is particularly important in the winter, when the fish are inactive and less able to escape a predator.

If you do not have suitable hiding places, then it is a good idea to lay a bucket on its side, at the base of the pond, for the winter period. This will provide a refuge for the fish.



Seasonal pond care



Fish, plants, and wildlife are all affected by temperature, and so it is important to care for your pond according to the time of year:

Spring

- Ensure pond equipment is clean and working correctly, ready for the first warm spell.
- Feed TetraPond Wheatgerm Sticks until the temperature rises above 10°C, and then switch to TetraPond Colour Sticks to

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improve colouration after the winter. You



replenish the water's mineral content after the winter. Add TetraPond AquaSafe to make the new water safe.

- Divide and re-pot pond plants.
- Because fish have a weaker immune system in early spring, observe them closely and treat the pond with TetraPond MediFin at the first sign of any disease or damage.
- Ensure the pond is well planted to provide protection for tadpoles and other wildlife.

Summer

- In warm weather, ensure the pond has good water circulation and movement, to maintain oxygen levels.
- Fish are at their most active, and producing more waste. Keep an eye on equipment and clean as necessary.
- To support healthy growth in the summer, feed TetraPond Koi Sticks Growth.
- Regular use of TetraPond AlgoFin and/or TetraPond PhosphateMinus will help to prevent algae growing.

The occasional use of a pond

vacuum can help prevent the base of the pond from getting too dirty, and improve the overall environment.



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Autumn

- Once the temperature falls below 10°C, feed TetraPond Wheatgerm Sticks.
- Prevent leaves falling into the pond with a net, or remove them every so often with a hand net.
- If necessary, autumn is the best time of year for cleaning out the pond.

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MediFin

 As temperatures are unstable, observe the fish closely and treat the pond at the first sign of damage or disease.

Winter

- Prevent ice forming over the pond to avoid the build-up of dangerous gases. A hole can be melted in the ice with a saucepan of warm water, although during extended periods of cold it is better to install a pond heater. Do not smash ice.
- Feed fish as and when they are active, with TetraPond Wheatgerm Sticks.
- Reduce water movement by turning off fountains, and if possible diverting flow around waterfalls and straight back into the pond. This helps to prevent excessive cooling of the water.
- If possible, lift the pump off the base of the pond onto a marginal shelf. This also helps to prevent excessive cooling of the water.
- Switch the ultraviolet clarifier off, but keep the filter system running. Only switch the filter off and drain it if there is a chance of it freezing, and turn it back on as soon as the weather warms.





Cleaning your pond



If you keep your pond healthy by following the advice in this brochure, it should be unnecessary to give your pond a full cleanout very often. However, if the base of the pond becomes very dirty, and it is not possible to clean it with a pond vacuum (which you may be able to hire from your aquatics centre), a cleanout can be beneficial.

The best time of year to clean the pond is early autumn, as the fish are still strong after the summer, but the temperature is not excessive. You need to plan a cleanout carefully, to ensure it runs smoothly.



Step 1

Begin by ensuring you have sufficient containers to hold the fish while you drain the pond down. Large plastic buckets are fine for this purpose. Spread the fish over as many of these as possible, to keep them healthy. You must also keep the biological filter media in a bucket of water, to prevent its population of bacteria dying. Avoid feeding the fish for 3 days before the cleanout, to reduce their oxygen demand and waste production. You also need to ensure you have some TetraPond AquaSafe to condition the new water, and some TetraPond **MediFin** to prevent any secondary infections and to aid wound healing. A net to catch the fish is also essential.

Step 2

On the day, begin by draining the pond down. You can use the pump to remove water from the pond, but turn your ultraviolet light off. Pump some of this water into the buckets where the fish will be kept. Once the water level is right down, you will find it much easier to catch the fish. Place them in the buckets of pond water, and keep them covered. Do not seal them though, as this will prevent them from receiving a constant flow of oxygen. You should also remove any plants from the pond.

Step 3

Having removed the fish, add some TetraPond AquaSafe to each bucket to help them deal with the added stress. Then proceed to clean the pond out, removing all of the debris from its base. At the same time. take the opportunity to clean any equipment.

Step 4

Once the pond is clean, refill it from the hose. Add **TetraPond AquaSafe** to neutralise chlorines and heavy metals, and then begin to replace the plants. Once full, return the biological media to the filter, and turn the pump and any other equipment back on.

Step 5

Do not put the fish straight back into the pond. The temperature will be

much lower than they are used to. Instead, slowly replace the water in their buckets with pond water over a period of one hour. Doing this slowly will acclimate them to the new temperature, and allow you to return them safely to the pond.

Step 6

Do not feed the fish for 1 week after cleaning out the pond, and add **TetraPond MediFin** to the water to help prevent any infection. If all is well, you can then return to a normal feeding and care routine.





Water quality

One of the keys to a healthy pond is good water quality. If you follow the care advice already presented in this and other **Tetra** brochures, the water quality in your pond should remain good, and you will have few problems. It is useful though to have an understanding of the most important water quality parameters, as they are so important to the health and appearance of your pond and its inhabitants.



Ammonia (NH₃/₄+)

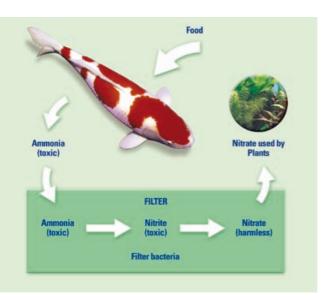
Ammonia is a waste product excreted by fish into the water. It is very toxic, with even moderate levels causing stress and ill-health. In the wild, ammonia is diluted by large volumes of water, and various natural processes remove what is left. In a pond, levels can accumulate rapidly if left unchecked, and quickly lead to sick fish.

Fortunately, naturally occurring nitrifying bacteria remove ammonia, turning it into nitrite, and then into harmless nitrate. These bacteria require a high surface area to grow

on, with a rich supply of nutrients and oxygen. This is the job of the filter, which contains biological media designed to provide a home for them. A pond with a properly functioning filter (see our 'Pond Equipment' brochure) should therefore have virtually no ammonia in it.

Nitrite (NO₂-)

Ammonia is converted into nitrite by nitrifying bacteria, before it is then turned into nitrate. Nitrite is also toxic to fish, and therefore needs to be kept under control. As with ammonia, a pond with a properly functioning filter should have virtually no nitrite.



Common causes of high ammonia or nitrite

A high ammonia or nitrite level indicates that the filter is not able to cope with the amount of waste that the fish are producing. Common causes include:

 The pond is new, and too many fish have been added at once, leading to New Pond Syndrome (see our 'Creating a Garden Pond' brochure for more information).

Dealing with high ammonia or nitrite

If you have a high ammonia or nitrite level, it needs to be dealt with to avoid harming the fish.

- Perform one or more partial water changes, using TetraPond AquaSafe to dilute levels rapidly. This is important if they are very high.
- Reduce feeding to once every day or two, until levels come back down.
- Ensure the filter is on all of the time, and is reasonably clean (wash biological media in pond water).
- Do not add any more fish until ammonia and nitrite are back to zero, and the filter is coping.
- Add a low concentration of pond salt to help reduce the toxicity of ammonia and nitrite. Use according to the instructions, or at a rate of 1g per litre of water.
- The biological filter media has been washed in tap water, killing its population of bacteria.
- The filter has been switched off for more than a few hours, leading to a loss of filter bacteria.
- A lot of fish have been added at once to an established pond, and the filter has not developed sufficient new bacteria to cope.
- The filter has been allowed to get very dirty, clogging the biological media and reducing its effectiveness.

Nitrate (NO₃⁻) & Phosphate (PO₄³⁻)

Nitrate is the end product of biological filtration, and is relatively harmless to fish. Phosphate is excreted directly by fish, and is leached from solid waste, and is also harmless. However, both nitrate and phosphate encourage algae to grow, and are signs that the pond may be too dirty.



Nitrate and phosphate can be controlled in the same way:

- Feed **TetraPond food** to reduce waste production.
- Have a good selection of plants, especially floating and oxygenating species, to soak up nitrate and phosphate.
- Do not allow excessive solid waste to accumulate at the base of the pond or in the filter. Occasional use of a pond vacuum can be useful for this.
- Do not overstock the pond (see our 'Creating a Garden Pond' brochure for more information).
- Use TetraPond
 PhosphateMinus to reduce and control phosphate, thereby helping to prevent algae growth.





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The pH of pond water is a measure of its acidity. Most pond fish can tolerate a wide range of pH levels, with an ideal somewhere between 6.5 and 8.5. The lower the pH, the more acidic the water is.

Very low pH levels can occur if the buffering capacity of the pond is allowed to deplete. This basically refers to its ability to resist pH changes, and it depends on the presence of bicarbonates (e.g. calcium bicarbonate) in the water. Over time, bicarbonates are used up by natural processes, leading to a gradual reduction in buffering capacity. This can be accelerated during periods of heavy rainfall, which will dilute bicarbonate levels. Eventually this can lead to a fall in pH to below the recommended minimum. Water supplies that are very 'soft', i.e. mineral-poor, have a lower level of bicarbonates, and are therefore more prone to low pH levels.

Very high pH levels may occur if the pond contains untreated cement, which should always be correctly sealed. In addition, in hard water areas, the constant topping up of ponds following evaporation can lead to an accumulation of minerals that may result in a high pH.

As well as extremes of pH, fish are especially sensitive to rapidly changing pH levels, even within their preferred range. This sometimes happens in water that is soft and poorly buffered, or if there is an

excessive amount of algae in the pond. In extreme cases, the pH may fluctuate widely in a 24 hour period.

Controlling pH

To keep the pH stable, and within an ideal range, follow these tips:

- Always treat cement with an appropriate pond sealant.
- In soft water areas, perform more frequent partial water changes to replenish the pond's buffering capacity. Use TetraPond AquaSafe to make new water safe.
- Control algae growth and avoid overstocking the pond.
- In extremely soft water, it may be possible to add materials to the pond to increase its buffering capacity (e.g. crushed oyster shells).
 Ask your aquatics outlet for more information.

Oxygen (O₂)

Fish, plants and filter bacteria all require a plentiful supply of oxygen to remain healthy. Water contains around 20-30 times less oxygen than air, and is therefore more of a concern for aquatic animals. It can be a particular problem in the summer, as warm water increases the oxygen demand of the fish, but can hold less oxygen. If fish begin hanging at the surface or around waterfalls and fountains in the summer, it can indicate a lack of oxygen.

Daily fluctuations in oxygen levels can also occur. This is because during the day, oxygenating plants and algae produce oxygen via photosynthesis. However, this process stops at night, and they continue to use it up along with the fish and other aquatic life. On hot summer nights, oxygen can therefore become limiting, and the fish may look quite lethargic in the morning.

Oxygen levels can be maintained with good water movement, which increases the diffusion of oxygen into the water from air. Waterfalls and fountains are excellent for this, and should be left running all the time in the summer. It is also important to control the growth of algae and oxygenating plants, and to avoid overstocking the pond.

Testing pond water

The only way to be sure that the water in your pond is healthy and balanced is by testing it. This is easy to do with **TetraPond test kits**, which are available for all of the most important water quality parameters.

For a quick analysis of your water quality, **TetraPond QuickTest 5 in 1** strips give values for five important water quality parameters in just 60 seconds. This makes it easy to carry out regular checks to ensure your pond is healthy, thereby avoiding any problems.

For an even more thorough and accurate understanding of

your water quality, **TetraPond liquid test kits** are available for checking
ammonia, nitrite, and pH values.
These are especially useful for using
in a new pond, where the filter has not
yet fully developed its population of
beneficial bacteria.

To test more water quality parameters, you can use **TetraTest liquid kits** for aquariums, or ask your aquatics outlet if they can check a water sample for you.

Ideal water quality parameters for a healthy pond

Ammonia ($NH_3/4^+$) Omg/l Nitrite (NO_2^-) <0.3mg/l Nitrate (NO_3^-) <50mg/l pH 6.5 - 8.5 Oxygen (O_2) >6mg/l





TetraPond care range

TetraPond's range of care products has been designed to make it easy for you to keep your pond healthy, and in top condition. Each product has been rigorously tested at our leading Research and Development laboratories, and produced to the highest production standards, to ensure they are both highly effective, as well as safe to use with fish, plants, and wildlife.

TetraPond AquaSafe

Turns harmful tap water into water that is ideal for pond fish, by neutralising chlorines, chloramines and heavy metals, adding ingredients that maintain the fish's protective mucus layer, and adding vitamins to support healthy stress resistance.

AquaSafe should be used whenever new water is added to the pond.



TetraPond Algae Remedies

TetraPond's algae remedies can be used to treat existing green water and blanketweed, or added preventatively to support a balanced environment and stop it growing in the first place.

TetraPond PhosphateMinus offers a more natural means of limiting algae growth, by reducing and controlling the phosphate content of pond water. In doing so, it compliments the natural removal of nutrients by pond plants. It is ideal for use in conjunction with TetraPond AlgoFin or AlgoRem, for long-term algae control.

TetraPond AlgoFin* has been independently tested and approved by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE 7695), for use against blanketweed. As an approved algaecide, AlgoFin is one of the few products available which has a direct impact on blanketweed. As with all TetraPond treatments, it is safe for fish, plants, and wildlife.

*Use biocides safely. Always read the label and product information before use.

TetraPond AlgoRem is a highly effective cure for green water, which works within hours to clump together suspended algae so it can easily be removed from the pond. Use it as needed to clear your pond water.

TetraPond MediFin

MediFin is a broad-spectrum treatment, designed to cure the majority of common pond fish ailments. It removes the need to accurately identify the cause of any illness, and allows you to rapidly treat the problem.

TetraPond ClariFin

TetraPond PlantaMin

Submerged (oxygenating) and floating plants rely on the water for a supply of trace elements and nutrients. These are used up over time, and need replacing to ensure lush, healthy growth. **PlantaMin** adds the correct amount of trace elements and nutrients to support healthy plants, without adding any additional nitrate and phosphate which could encourage algae. Used regularly it will promote good growth of plants, which in turn will help to naturally control algae.



