

Pond Buyer's Checklist

Your Complete Guide to Hiring the Right Contractor & Planning Your Dream Pond

Contractor Vetting

- ☐ Check for valid state contractor's license and insurance
- ☐ Review at least 10 completed projects in their portfolio
- ☐ Read 15+ online reviews (Google, Facebook, Houzz)
- ☐ Visit at least one completed project in person
- ☐ Confirm they specialize in ponds, not just general landscaping
- ☐ Verify they offer a written warranty on workmanship
- ☐ Check Better Business Bureau rating and complaints
- ☐ Confirm they'll pull necessary permits for your area

Questions to Ask Your Contractor

- ☐ How many ponds have you built in the last 5 years?
- ☐ What brand of equipment and liner do you use, and why?
- ☐ What type of filtration system do you recommend for my situation?
- ☐ Can you walk me through your construction process step by step?
- ☐ What is your typical timeline from contract to completion?
- ☐ Do you offer maintenance packages after installation?
- ☐ What does your warranty cover, and for how long?
- ☐ How do you handle unexpected issues (rock, utilities, drainage)?
- ☐ Will you provide a detailed written estimate with line items?
- ☐ Do you have experience with fish/koi ponds specifically?
- ☐ What is included in the price vs. what costs extra?
- ☐ How do you handle drainage and overflow?
- ☐ Can I see a 3D design or detailed sketch before we start?
- ☐ What ongoing maintenance will my pond require?
- ☐ Do you offer financing or payment plans?

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ☐ Choosing the cheapest bid without comparing scope of work
- ☐ Skipping biological filtration (leads to green water and algae)
- ☐ Placing the pond in full sun without shade planning
- ☐ Not planning for fish before construction begins
- ☐ Skipping a maintenance plan (ponds need regular care)
- ☐ Building too small -- most owners wish they'd gone bigger
- ☐ Ignoring electrical requirements (GFCI outlets, dedicated circuits)
- ☐ Not considering winter care and equipment protection

Planning Your Pond -- Worksheet

- ☐ Desired pond size: _____ ft x _____ ft
- ☐ Depth preference: _____ ft

- ☐ Budget range: \$ _____ to \$ _____
- ☐ Fish? Yes / No -- Type: _____
- ☐ Waterfall? Yes / No -- Desired height: _____
- ☐ Lighting? Yes / No -- Number of lights: _____
- ☐ Preferred location in yard: _____
- ☐ Timeline preference: _____
- ☐ Maintenance preference: DIY / Professional / Hybrid

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