

# FISHTALES

Well done, Nick! You've won a new Blagdon Green Water UV Clarifier, which offers control over green water algae in Koi ponds. It comes with weatherproof transformers, as well as pipework fittings and a UV light indicator window so that you can see if the unit is working. If you'd like to win a UV clarifier (RRP £387.59), send us your story, including how you got started and any problems you had, with at least six photos or digital images (minimum 300dpi).

Send your photos and stories to: Fish tales, Koi, Immediate Media, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN, or you can email us at: [koi@immediate.co.uk](mailto:koi@immediate.co.uk)

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WIN BLAGDON UV CLARIFIER



Having learned lots of lessons from his first build, **Nick Holmes-Mackie** set about constructing a proper Koi pond...



The cat-approved site for the new Koi pond

## FACT FILE

**MEASUREMENTS:** 5ft x 15ft x 5ft; 2,200 gallons.  
**PUMPS:** Oase Aquamax Eco 6000 and Evolution Aqua Airpump 70 with two air stones.  
**FILTER:** EazyPod Air and 25w Yamitsu UV unit.  
**KOI:** 10 assorted UK-bred Koi measuring 6-8in.

### ED'S COMMENT

Well done, Nick, all that time that you spent planning the project has clearly paid off. Siting the pond on the edge of the decking will enable you to soak up those great views from your garden as you observe your Koi. Let's hope that the rain lets up so that you can get out there and enjoy it!

This is my second pond. The last one was much larger, but it wasn't a Koi pond – it was a rock-edged 'hole in the ground' liner pond without any provision for water management. It was a nightmare to maintain and plagued by blanketweed, and although I loved it, I hated the fact that it hadn't been well thought through.

I put a lot of effort into planning my second project and it made all the difference. First of all, I read through hundreds of screens of builds on the forum and learned a great deal from them. I then designed the pond as part of a garden makeover using Google SketchUp, which was absolutely invaluable because it showed what the pond would look like in the garden.

The resulting pond is block-built and accommodates a slight slope in the land, as it's level with the ground on the 'uphill' side, but with a low wall on the other. We finished the pond in November and

over-wintered 10 two-year-old Koi from New Forest Koi in it. We're really pleased with the outcome and I even set up a website to outline the details of the build: [www.tentonpond.holmes-mackie.co.uk](http://www.tentonpond.holmes-mackie.co.uk).

### Digging the dirt

Excavation was straightforward, as it involved using a mini-digger and putting the waste into a skip. We levelled the top part of the garden to give two distinct levels with decking and an oak-framed gazebo. We also created a soak-away below the pond so that filter cleaning would be simple. The hole seemed enormous, especially as it had to include the filter area at full depth to accommodate the bottom drain.

Once we'd installed the bottom drain and laid the concrete base, work started on the pond walls. At the same time, foundation blocks were laid for the gazebo structure so that it could be erected. This was a major

A mini-digger makes light work of excavating the hole for the pond





With the structure in place the pond starts to take shape



Nick begins the process of installing the liner

undertaking, with the largest members weighing about 160kg and needing to be raised over two metres.

Plumbing the pond was fairly simple and enjoyable. We opted for a bottom drain to EasyPod, then pumped through the UV filtration unit back to the pond. The pipework consisted of flexible hoses and stainless steel jubilee clips.

Despite being heavy and unwieldy, fitting the box liner only needed one person. I didn't relish cutting holes in the liner for the bottom drain and return, but sealing them was easy and there weren't any leaks.

Then, it was time to fill the pond – a great moment, as I'm sure that anyone who's built one will agree.

### So near, and yet...

We were about halfway through the work at

this point. The pond was full of water and habitable, but nothing was actually completed. The electrics comprised an extension lead, the top edges needed finishing with coping, the sides had to be rendered, and the decking and gazebo still needed work. There were also steps to be built, turf to be laid and an awful lot of tidying up to be done!

It was quite straightforward to incorporate the pond into the house electrics with RCD protection, and I was able to run an armoured cable when we built the steps and route it under the decking. The pumps and UV are connected via IP 55 switches which are inside the pond filter housing.

It's amazing how this Koi keeping hobby keeps you on your toes. There are so many facets to it. My pond has good water condition readings, but the water isn't

completely clear. I've been on the forum to ask questions about predators and feeding, and read all sorts of discussions about equipment, heating, fish health, and so on. I really revel in the routine of filter cleaning, testing and topping up the water, and daily feeding, particularly as the fish are so responsive. I'd say I'm hooked!

But, would I have done things any differently? Firstly, I'd have incorporated a skimmer. I didn't do this for financial reasons, but can now see that it's worth the investment, so I plan to retrofit one. Secondly, I'd have arranged the air supply differently, so that there wouldn't be an air hose running over the side of the pond into the water. I also think that I should have given shading more thought as I suspect that being very open to the skies may cause us some problems in the future! ■



The moment that makes all the hard work worthwhile



**FISH TALES GUIDELINES**  
 The winners are chosen according to effort, achievement and what we fancy most. It doesn't matter if you're a beginner with an 800 gallon pond, or a veteran with an 8,000 gallon pond, everyone stands an equal chance. Your photos and stories can be returned but, unfortunately, we can't respond to all letters personally. Entries must also be resident in the UK. If you'd like to find out when your pond is going to appear in Fish Tales, give us a call or email us via: [koi@mmardata.co.uk](mailto:koi@mmardata.co.uk)