

Stormwater Ponds Quick Guide

Landscape Professionals

Stormwater ponds are a staple for many communities and residential areas. The main objective of these ponds is to collect runoff water and mitigate downstream water impairment by natural treatment processes. For landscape professionals, it is important to understand stormwater pond systems to adequately manage the surrounding grass and plants and ensure a healthy pond ecosystem. The plants around the pond's edge are critical components to reduce nutrients and contaminants that enter the pond, which is the key to maintaining water quality. Here are some general tips to promote best practices for the maintenance of stormwater ponds.

► General Tips for Maintenance

1. Design landscape beds surrounding ponds with low-maintenance, natural plants. This will allow for minimum upkeep, while providing maximum benefit for nutrient removal.



Buffering strip with natural vegetation and mowed path

2. When working around the pond edge, especially in planted beds, ensure residual soil and plant debris do not erode into the pond. Building up of soil and other solid material can cause clogging, which leads to localized flooding.

3. Keep heavy lawn care equipment away from steep edges of ponds. This could lead to breaking of turf roots causing erosion of the soil into the pond. It's best to leave a strip of grass or plants around the pond to help reduce runoff nutrients and catch litter before it reaches the pond.

4. Clear litter from water or landscape beds to keep plants thriving. Landscape beds are used as filters for larger trash but can become inundated if not maintained.

5. Make sure grass clippings are directed away from the pond and removed from the downslope leading to the pond. Grass clippings in the water will increase nutrient loads, leading to eutrophic events and possibly fish kills as they decompose.



Grass clippings floating in a pond

6. Replace any damaged or dying plants in landscape beds. These plants are vital to the nutrient removal processes for stormwater ponds.

7. Avoid planting bushes, trees or other woody vegetation on levees that serve to maintain proper pond depth. Their roots can eventually cause leakage. If a tree is already established in these areas, avoid damaging it – when it dies the decomposing roots may contribute to significant leakage.

8. Whenever possible, avoid any bushes or trees that can shed leaves into the pond.

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