

# Mini Wetlands

## Creating habitats for amphibians and reptiles in your yard

### Materials

- 1 – 10'x 10' aquatic safe PVC synthetic liner (30 mil or thicker)  
~\$.60/sq foot \$60.40
- Two layers of 8-ounce geo-textile fabric  
~\$.40/sq foot \$80.00
- 26 – 10" galvanized spikes (nails) and washers that fit \$22.00
- Paint or flags \$5.00
- 5 lb. bag of wheat and 2 bales of clean straw \$15.00
- Packet of wetland seed mix \$5.00

Estimated Cost  
\$187.40

### Tools

#### Required

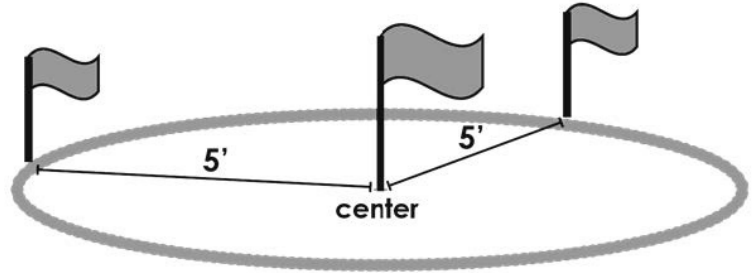
- Shovel and mattock
- Wheelbarrow
- Line level
- Gloves

#### Recommended

- Rake
- Field marking paint
- Surveying flags or sticks marked with surveyor's flagging tape
- Hose or rope to out-line perimeter
- Sturdy hammer to pound in stakes

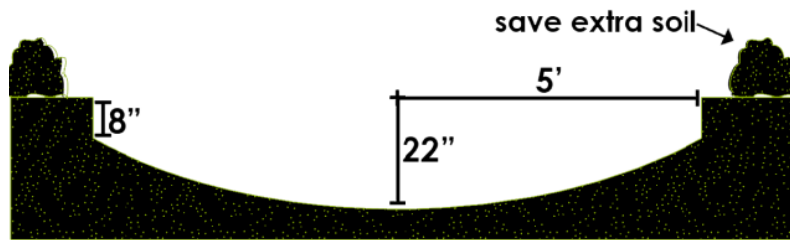
While constructing habitats be sure to comply with all local regulations and be safe.

### Step 1. Wetland Layout



- Mark the center of your wetland with a flag or paint
- Mark the perimeter of the "circle" with surveying flags by measuring out 5 feet in multiple directions from the center point
- Outline the perimeter with field marking paint (or with a garden hose, surveying flags, or length of rope).
- Call 811 the National call before you dig phone number

### Step 2. Digging



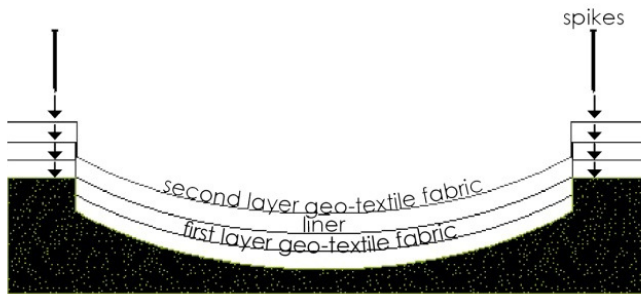
- Dig down 22" in the center, saving the soil removed.
- Approximately 6" of soil will go back into the wetland after the liner is installed.
- This will give your wetland a maximum depth of 16".
- Dig from the middle outward to the marked perimeter, removing less soil as you move out.
- Think shallow dish with gradual slopes.
- The depth should only be ~8" as you reach the perimeter.
- The 6" of soil going back in the depression will make the final depth around the edge ~2".
- Rake the depression, removing rocks and clods.

### Step 3. Leveling edges and Installing Liner



- Use a string level to even-up the perimeter to permit overflow to seep out on all sides and recharge ground water.
  - It doesn't have to be perfect, but you want to avoid overflow into a narrow spillway.
- Place the first layer of geo-textile fabric into the depression and even-up the edge around the perimeter using the line level and a board, or a hose level.
- Place the liner over the first geo-textile layer and then cover it with the second layer of geo-textile fabric (The liner should be sandwiched in between the 2 layers of geo-textile fabric).
- Place washers on the spikes and hammer them ~2" below the out-side edge of the fabric/liner and about 18" apart around the perimeter.
- Make sure spikes go through all three layers.
- Trim off excess liner on the corners

## Step 4. Covering Liner



- Spread about 6" of soil over the entire liner.
- Any remaining soil can be spread around the outside perimeter.
- Add a thin layer of leaves and a few tree limbs.
- The limbs will provide egg laying sites for salamanders and perch sites for frogs, dragonflies, and damselflies.
- Sow native wetland seeds around the edge.

## Step 5. Buffering Zone

- Spread wheat and straw over any bare spots around your wetland.
- Any leftover wheat or straw can be spread inside the wetland, or use a bale of straw to sit on and admire your work.
- Establish native plants around your wetland to attract different types of invertebrates (amphibian food) and provide protective habitat for herps.

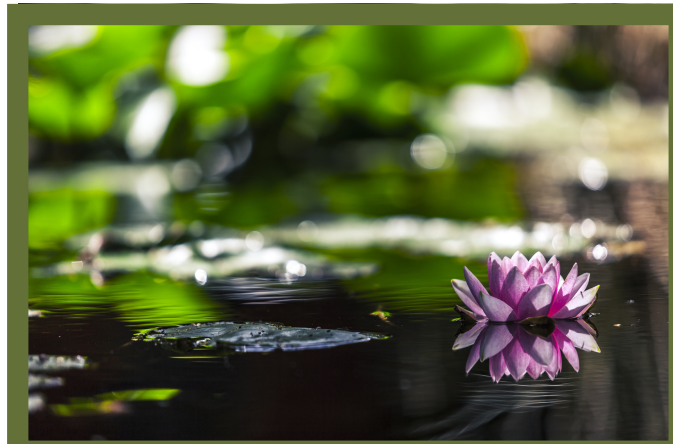
Once wildlife become established, it is recommended to enjoy them from a distance, both for your and the animals' health and safety.

## Additional Resources

**For more information about SEPARC and to learn about your local herpetofauna (reptiles and amphibians) please visit [SEPARC.ORG](http://SEPARC.ORG)**

**Visit our parent organization, Partners in <https://parcplace.org>, for national conservation efforts and other regional groups.**

**For more habitat ideas please visit:**  
<http://separc.org/herp-education-resources>  
and check out the full SEPARC Yard Herping Guide.



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