Frogs play an important part in our environment. They are both predators and prey, helping to keep populations of insects and smaller animals at bay and providing food for larger animals. They are also an important indicator species. Their skin is permeable and can absorb toxins from their environment, therefore they are incredible indicators of the health of the ecosystems they live in. Frogs are one of the few creatures on earth that go through a process called metamorphosis where they look completely different as an adolescent than they do as an adult. They begin their life as fishlike creatures called tadpoles that use gills to swim and breathe underwater. As they mature, they lose their tails and develop legs. Adult frogs can breathe through lungs but absorb much of their oxygen from the water they live in through their skin.
Some major safety tips to follow before you stock your pond:

- Be patient. If you build it, the frogs will come.
- DON’T stock the pond with pet store frogs or remove frogs from the wild and relocate them to your pond, that could make matters worse. Non-native species can wreak havoc on local ecosystems. Even native frogs could carry diseases that can cause death in local wild frog populations. Just create a good environment for frogs and eventually they will appear.
- The pond should have sloped sides so that the newly changed frogs can emerge from the pond when they are ready. Believe it or not, frogs can drown.
- Plant native plants and include lily pads and other surfaces for emergent frogs to rest on. The Mounts Nursery sells plants that are perfect for your Frog Bog!
- If you have young children in the area, keep the pond fenced off to prevent accidents.

***Don’t stock the pond with fish...they’ll eat the tadpoles.***
How to Make Your Pond

A wildlife pond is perhaps the easiest type of pond to construct. It doesn’t require a pump, so it needn’t be close to a source of electricity. A wildlife pond is built to look like a natural part of the landscape.

Choose a location for your pond. Most ponds do best in spots that get mixed sun and shade, since this environment allows plants to grow and keeps algae at a minimum. You may want to locate the pond in a place you can see from your home, so you can enjoy it even in cold or rainy weather. If you’re constructing your pond, the first thing to do is call your gas and electric company. Ask them to come to your house and mark the locations of your gas and electric lines, so you’ll know not to dig in those spots. Don’t choose a spot too close to trees, as you may damage their root systems.

Size and depth of your pond. Your pond can be just a few feet wide and deep, however larger ponds are easier to maintain. They tend to be more stable, so plants and other wildlife have a better chance of survival. Use a piece of brightly colored string or a rope to map out the shape of your pond. This will give you an idea as to how big you want it to be and a guide to where to dig. You can also purchase a pre-constructed pond, but designing your own gives you more creativity.

Digging the pond. Using a shovel should be sufficient but keep these factors in mind as you dig: One side of the pond should have a gradual slope, a beach of sorts, so that animals that wander in will be able to make their way out. Animals can drown in ponds with steep or vertical on every side.
Save the pieces of sod that you remove from the digging area. Also remove the top soil and save it in a separate pile as you dig. You will be using it later when you edge the pond. Finally, when you are finished digging, feel and remove any sharp objects such as rocks, roots, and sticks from the hole. You don’t want them to puncture your liner.

**Line the pond.** First line the pond with a layer of sand, making sure to cover every crevice. Next add a layer of biodegradable materials, such as newspapers or burlap. Cover this layer with a large piece of waterproof pond liner. Different grades of waterproof pond liners can be found at home improvement stores or specialty shops that sell pond plants and supplies.

**Fill the pond.** A hose may be used to fill the pond up to the edge, making sure to stop before it overflows. Water collected from rain or a natural pond is another way to fill your Frog Bog, just make sure you don’t have any fish in your collection containers. Natural pond water will have the natural bacteria and microscopic animals that will establish you pond as a more natural source of wildlife. Once your pond is filled you may trim the overlapping liner to about 6-12 inches.

**Holding your liner in place.** Once you have trimmed your liner, lift back or fold the excess toward and into the pond. Use a shovel to cut a six inch slit under the sod you have not removed around the entire pond. Gently lift the grass and tuck the edges of the pond liner into the slit as you go around the entire pond to conceal the excess liner under the sod. This gives the pond a “natural” edge, which will be inviting to the wildlife in your area. You may wish to place some rocks around parts of the pond edge or on one side for character or composition.

**Plants for your pond:** Create a muddy pond bottom by returning some of the topsoil back into the pond. Pour a bag or two of river rocks into your Bog to give hiding places for tadpoles and other wildlife that may make the pond their new home.
Some examples of plants suitable to our zone and climate:

**Water Lilies:** Several colorful examples of Nymphaea include: Colorata (blue-violet), Panama Pacific (plum), Shirley Bryne (magenta), Stan Skinger (yellow), Madame Ganna Walska (yellow), Josephine (white), Tropic Sunset (orange-pink flowers)

#Water Poppy - Hydrocleys nymphoides
*Zephyr Lily* - Zephyranthes candida
+ Bluebell - Campanula rotundi folia,
+Society Garlic - Tulbaghia viroaceae
*Water Iris* - Iris Louisiana
*“Black Magic” Taro* - Colocasia esculent
+Bog Lily - Crinum americanum
#”Violet Stemmed” Taro - Colocasia esculent
*Dwarf Papyrus* - Cyperus haspens
+Canna Americana variegata
*Umbrella Palm* - Cypress alternifolius
+Canna x generalis
+Spider Lily - Hymenocallis caroliniana
#Blue spreading Rush - Juncus patens
+Corkscrew Rush - Juncus effuses sprialus
#Sweet Flags - Acorus calamus
+Japanese Rush - Acorus gramineus
+Purple Pickerelweed - Pontederia cordata

*Shade tolerant, #sun tolerant,
+ tolerates both sun and shade*