

Why

Water is life. Pools used to be dug as cattle watering holes, to irrigate crops or were part of ancient agricultural practices. With the advent of tap water, cisterns, basins and modern techniques, ponds lost that economic function and disappeared. What we have lost sight of is that the water in those pools was (and is!) also necessary for many plants, amphibians, insects and other animals. Since biodiversity is increasingly under pressure, it is therefore important to restore old cattle drinking pools or create new ones in suitable places.

What

Check the suitability of the environment

- Wet spot
- Pools and other small landscape elements (hedges, wood edges, shrubs, orchards or groves) within a radius of 200-500m
- Sufficient light
- No injection of pesticides or fertilizers from field

Start with the plans

- Area $^{100m^2} - ^{200m^2}$ in a free form with jagged bank line
- Slopes of 20° to 25° on NO side, slopes may be steeper 30° to 35° on SW side
- Depth of 1.5m – 2m, 0.5m below established permanent groundwater level
- Floor area of at least $^{2m^2}$.

If necessary, apply for an environmental permit through the environmental counter

Start building your pool

- Dig a new pool in August/September, restore your pool from late September to October
- Do not put a seal or foil in the pool; the water level is allowed to fluctuate naturally
- Do not put out animals or plants in the pool, they will spontaneously colonize your pool
- Preferably process the excavated soil locally
- Fence a portion of a cattle watering hole

Maintain your pool

Cost

The cost varies depending on pond area, distance for performing excavator/contractor, soil handling, inflation and the like. Keep in mind a guide price of €1700 to €2000 excluding VAT. However, via the VLIF non-productive investment aid (NPI), digging a pond can be 100% subsidized. Many Regional Landscapes also offer advice and support for pond construction.

Benefits

A livestock watering hole is a cost- and time-efficient alternative to using tap water as drinking water for your livestock. However, the biggest gains are made in terms of biodiversity of aquatic plants and water-dependent species.

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