



Go Ponding

It's always a good time to explore a local pond or stream. Grab your boots or old sneakers, a shallow container to hold what you find, and your crackerjack observation skills to look for creatures in the water. What lives in the open water, the weeds, and the mud? Are they big or small, fast or slow, brightly colored or blending in? Go with a buddy to be safe and have fun getting a little wet and muddy.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Boots or old shoes that can get wet or muddy
- Container like a larger yogurt cup, dishpan, or bucket, preferably white
- Spoon or cup to move creatures around
- Small net with handle
- Optional: Ice cube tray to isolate creatures
- Optional: Magnifier or [homemade pond viewer](#)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Find a safe place to be near water, for example a flat open surface near shallow water.
2. Dip your container into the pond and add 2-4 inches of water.
3. Set your container on a flat surface, wait for it to settle, and scan for anything moving.
4. Meanwhile, put your net in the pond and swish it several times through the water. Catch some leaves and mud on the bottom. Empty the net into the water you collected.
5. Wait for the mud to settle. Look for small movements where creatures are traveling in the water. Examine the undersides of any leaves for hidden creatures.
6. Optional: Use the spoon and smaller containers to isolate creatures for a better view. Remember to add water first!
7. When finished, put everything back gently. Rinse your equipment for next time.