

So, you're thinking about a farm pond?

SELECTING POND SITES

Three things very important in selecting sites for fish ponds are topography, soil texture, and water supply, according to Penn State's Special Circular 263, Fish Ponds

Where these factors are equally satisfactory for several locations, appearance and convenience for the owner may become the overriding considerations.

A pond located near a house, where it can be observed frequently and conveniently, will be safer and more desirable for family recreation. It can be used as a source of water for fire protection or for irrigating a small garden.

If there are plans to use it for fire protection, an all-weather road should be constructed to the dam or to a point near the deepest water. Rural fire companies usually carry several hundred feet of hose and can push water a great distance, but they must be able to get their pumps within 15 feet of the water.

Small ponds are not easy to manage for fish. Normally, ponds of less than one-fourth acre in surface area are too small for effective management of warm-water fish.

However, ponds as small as one-tenth acre in surface area may be suitable for trout if they have suitable water quality, including cool temperatures (60-70 degrees) during the summer.

Topography

Ideal topography for a fish pond is a natural depression or a broad drainage area with a narrow neck at its lower end where only a short dam will be needed.

The most economical site is one that will require the smallest dam and the least amount of work for the size of pond created. Small ponds collecting runoff from large drainage areas require expensive overflow and spillway systems to handle excess water safely.

Soil texture

Soil texture must be taken into consideration when selecting the pond site. The bottom of the pond, the banks, and the earth fill placed in the dam must contain enough clay to

impede seepage and make the reservoir hold water. Normally, areas that include exposed bedrock, shale ledges, and beds of sand or gravel are not satisfactory.

Anyone who is considering the construction of a pond should have the soils and geological conditions in the area checked by a professional consultant knowledgeable and competent in making site investigations.

Water supply

Springs, seeps, and small streams normally provide cool and relatively clean water suitable for the propagation of fish.

Where springs and seeps are not available, surface

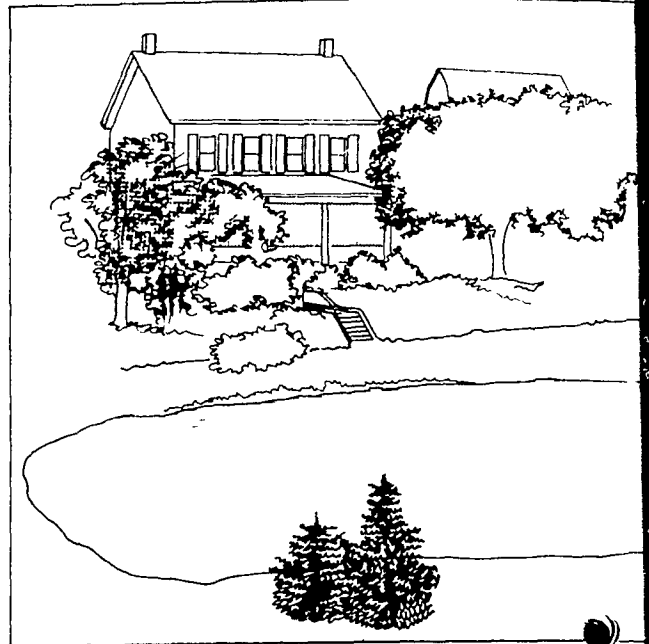
runoff can be the primary source of water to maintain water level of the pond. The drainage area should be large enough to assure that the combined surface runoff and subsurface seepage is adequate for fish culture during even the driest years. Normally, a drainage area of 10 to 20 acres yields enough water for a one-acre pond.

Fish ponds relying on surface runoff may be difficult to manage if the quantity of water cannot be controlled. Too much water flowing through a pond has a detrimental effect on the fish population.

If the drainage area is larger than necessary to

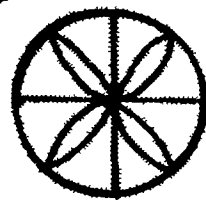
maintain the proper water level, some of the runoff can be diverted around the pond.

Surface runoff water should be free of silt, pesticides, and other forms of pollution that may be toxic to fish. It may be necessary to establish a sod filter-strip between the runoff area and the pond to trap sediment and keep it out of the water. Barnyard drainage, with its high concentration of natural fertilizer, should be diverted away from the pond. Too much nitrogen and other nutrients will cause excessive growth of weeds and algae, making the pond difficult to manage.



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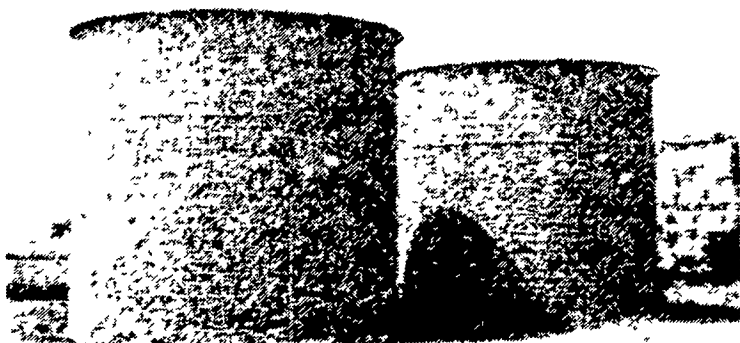
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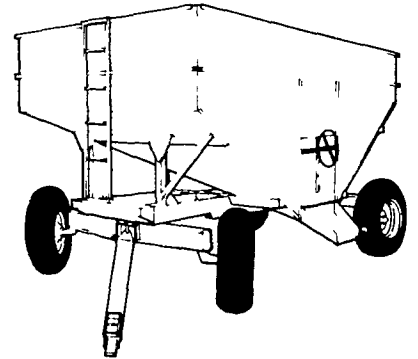
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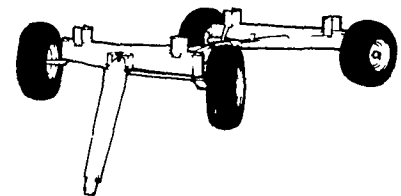
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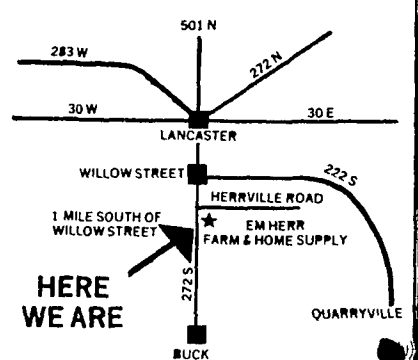


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