



PROJECT

make a
no-fuss
fountain

Unlike larger water features, this simple fountain needs almost no maintenance—and it's practical for even the smallest garden.

There's no denying the joys of having your own pond. But there's also no question that elaborate water features require a lot of maintenance—and they don't always work for small gardens.

Luckily, gardeners with limited time and smaller spaces can still enjoy the sounds and sights of running water. We installed this fountain in about half a day, and though it involved some heavy lifting, it's perfectly doable for the average gardener with reasonable flexibility and upper-body strength.

So scope out a spot in your yard where you'd like to relax next to your own bubbling fountain, gather up some supplies, and dig in!

materials

- Tape measure
- Spray paint
- Pump and resin basin (available at home and garden centers and specialty pond-supply sources)
- ½-inch flexible water tubing
- Pea gravel
- Pre-drilled stone (available at landscape supply outlets)
- River rock (we used 1½-inch decorative tumbled stone)
- Flagstone
- Mexican beach pebbles

method

Pound a temporary stake (a stick works fine, too) into the center of the area where you want your fountain. Measure the radius of the platform you want surrounding the fountain. For example, if you want your platform to be 8 feet across, measure 4 feet from the center stake. Mark with spray paint. Continue measuring the same distance from the center stake until you've completed a circle. **(See Photo 1.)** This will outline the rough contour of the platform, with the fountain in the middle.

In the center of the circle you've marked, dig a hole just big enough for the resin basin, and place the basin in the hole. The sides of the basin should be level with the ground. **(See Photo 2.)**

Place pump inside the basin. **(See Photo 3.)**

The electrical cord should come out one of the side doors of the basin, and the water tubing should come out the middle. **(See Photo 4.)** This section of tubing should be long enough to run from the pump





tips

- You can purchase any type of gravel and pebbles available in your region; just make sure the gravel that covers the top of the resin basin is too big to fall through the slots.
- For a more casual look, use ground covers between the flagstones that sit on top of soil. Use a quick grower like creeping thyme or ajuga, and be vigilant about stray weeds while the ground covers are growing and filling the gaps.
- To remove algae from the rock, turn the fountain off and wait until the rock is completely dry, then brush off algae flakes with a stiff-bristled brush. Use a solution of nine parts water and one part bleach to scrub off any remaining algae.
- Remove the pump and bring it inside when temperatures get below freezing.

all the way up through the pre-drilled rock.

Place some smaller pieces of flagstone in the center of the basin, around the water tubing, to stabilize the basin. Add river rock to fill in the gaps. **(See Photo 5.)**

Continue adding river rock until the entire top of the basin is covered, except the door where the electrical cord exits. Carefully insert the tubing into the large pre-drilled rock and push it through until it comes out the top. You may need to use pieces of flagstone to balance the rock and make it sturdy. **(See Photo 6.)**

Cut the water tubing so it will remain just below the opening in the rock. **(See Photo 7.)**

Cover the door for the electrical cord with Mexican beach pebbles. **(See Photo 8.)** When it's time to remove the pump in winter, the large pebbles will give you a visual

clue about where the door to the pump is located.

Pour pea gravel on top of larger gravel so the fountain base will blend in with the rest of the patio. Then cover the entire patio with pea gravel. Starting at the outside of the circle, carefully choose flagstones and place them on top of the pea gravel, leaving small spaces between stones. **(See Photo 9.)**

Fill in the gaps between the stones with more pea gravel. **(See Photo 10.)**

Fill the basin with water, plug in the pump, and enjoy your new fountain! 🌿

Scott Reynolds is owner of Creative Habitats in Minnetonka, Minnesota. Amy Sitze is editor of Gardening How-To. Tracy Walsh is the magazine's assistant art director.

For more information, see Resource Guide on page 54.