Why are pond pumps so expensive?

Pond · https://shirleyaquatics.co.uk/knowledge/why-are-pond-pumps-so-expensive/

Why are fish pond pumps so expensive: An honest appraisal of pond pump features and their value for money in 2025

Whether you’re looking to replace an existing pond pump that’s lasted you ten years or you’re choosing a pond pup for the first time, there is a massive selection on the market today, and nothing seems to vary more than their cost.

I'm not just talking about comparing tiny teeny water feature pumps and hulking great koi pond pumps, no! Even pumps that seemingly move the same volume of water can have dramatically differing costs.

Right now, you can order a pump from Machine Mart that will produce nearly 7000 litres per hour for £59.98. In fact, here you go, here is the link:

https://www.machinemart.co.uk/p/cse400a-11-2in-submersible-water-pump

Or, you could go on to our website and order an Oase Aquamax Eco Premium 7000 (7000lph) for £358

https://shirleyaquatics.co.uk/product/aquamax-eco-premium-pond-pump

(Prices and links are correct at the time of writing this article)

The Aquamax Is almost 6 times the price of the draper pump and its only delivering 14% more water.

Or to put it another way, you would be paying an extra 30p per litre! Does that sound like a good deal?

I'm sure you've heard from many a salesman "You get what you pay for" or "You've got to expect to pay more for German engineering"

Whilst these two statements may be true, I would like to give you all the fact so that YOU can make the right decision for you.

We can now take a look at the factors that will affect how much a pump costs: **Running cost** (that ones a biggie!), **Longevity, build quality, output , guarantee and functionality**

Running cost, what do pond pumps cost to run?

This factor has never been more important. I have had customers shutting down ponds they have loved for decades because they are scared of how much they are costing to run. At the very least you should be fully aware of how much your existing pump or the one you are going to buy is going to cost you over the next 1,2,5 or 10 years.

Most of the major pond pump brands have had to put running costs or pond pump economy front and centre.

They can be very keen to shout about how economical their pumps are….or keep a little quieter about it if their pump is particularly thirsty!

There are even intelligent pumps such as the aquamax eco premiums that sense the water temperature and electronically reduce their flow, when the fish don't need it as much, therefore reducing the running cost even further.

So just how much does a pond pump cost to run?

Well, the current U.K. average is 24.9p per kilowatt hour. That is to say, burning 1000w an hour will cost you that 24.9 pence.

In short, 10w of electricity will cost us £22 per year to run.

Pond pumps are the life support systems of your pond. They are the literal heart of you koi pond or garden pool, pumping life sustaining oxygen rich water around the pond. For that reason, they must remain on 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Going back to our original example. The £59.98 draper pump, whilst it pumps a respectable 6000 litres an hour, it uses 400w to do that.

So this pump would cost you

400w /1000w = 0.4

x 0.249= 0.10 or 10p per hour

That's £2.40 per day or £876 per year.

The Aquamax eco premiums 7000 runs at 45w, which equates to 27p per day or £98 per year. What's even more impressive, is that the Aquamax eco premium range has something called seasonal flow control, which if turned on, brings the annual running cost of this pump down to £83.63

[Why are pond pumps so expensive]

So, that saving at the time of purchase of just over £298 is now costing you an additional £792 per year. Shocking eh!

What's more, the Aquamax has a 5-year guarantee (we'll come to that later) so assuming the draper pump lasts for 5 years (we'll come to that later too) it would end up costing an extra £3961 that's also based on electricity prices remaining the same (I know! I couldn't keep a straight face either), lets just say that again:

Choosing this cheaper pump will cost you an extra £3961 in electricity

Whilst this may appear to be an extreme example, it is something we come across quite regularly in the store. Especially when people have had pumps for ten years or more. Running cost wasn't so much of an issue as it is today.

The Hozelock Aquaforce 7000 is a pump that is regularly chosen over the Aquamax eco premium 7000, because it is a reliable brand and sells for £219.95

£138 cheaper than the Aquamax 8000 eco premium.

The aquaforce does come with a 5 year guarantee but uses 95w, 30w more than the aquamax.

Aquamax eco premium 7000 annual running cost £83.63

Hozelock aquaforce 8000 annual running cost £207

Over 5 years the Aquaforce 8000 costs £616 more to run, or put another way, the Aquamax eco premium will have saved you the extra purchase cost in less than 2 years.

How long will your pond pump last?

Do you know? Does the manufacturer know? Well, in most cases they have a good idea. In some cases the pumps have gone through rigorous testing, simulating years of use in just a few months, by putting them in ponds and passing sand through them constantly. Ok, yes, you guessed it, I'm talking about the Aquamax range here, but you'll be glad to know that both the Aquamax eco premium range and the Aquamax classic range go through this testing.

Not to keep picking on the draper, but sump pumps such as these were originally designed as temporary solutions to flooding, i.e. not designed to run continuously, they have a finite life expectancy when running continuously. Pond pumps were not all built equal, their guarantee period should give you a good indication of how long they will last. Not that a pump with a 5-year guarantee is going to conk out after 5 years and a day, but you would expect that a pump with a 5-year guarantee is going to last longer than a pump with a 3-year guarantee. Pond pumps should last a lot longer these days. Aquamax pumps are expected to last 10 years or more.

The biggest variable is us! How we look after them and what we force them to do.

By cleaning your pond pump regularly, you reduce the strain it us under on a daily basis, it stands to reason that its going to keep going for longer.

Guarantee

It's important to remember that you are buying the guarantee as part of the ORIGINAL purchase, so if your pump breaks down within the guarantee period, the guarantee on the replacement pump runs from the original purchase date. Even if your pump fails one day before the end of the guarantee period, you would only get a 1-day guarantee with the replacement pump. You do not get a fresh 2, 3 or 5-year guarantee every time you get a replacement pump.

For that reason, it's important to get a pump with a long guarantee. This might sound obvious, but the length of the guarantee that the manufacturers offer is an important indicator of the quality of the pump. A five-year guarantee is currently the longest you will get.

It's worth putting a five-year guarantee on your shopping list.

If nothing else it gives you piece of mind that you don't have to worry about you pond pump for another five years. It also means that the manufacturers have faith in their product and that they know it will continue to do it's job for a minimum of 5 years, in fact, these pumps should last you 10 years. We always use these pumps on our systems, we have a lot to focus on with looking after

customers and taking care of our fish, so it’s important that the “heart” of every system we have keeps pumping.

Pumping power

You could run 5 different pumps at the same time, each rated at 8000 litres per hour and you would get 5 different outputs. They should all deliver that 8000 litres directly out of the pump, but as soon as you start putting any back pressure on the pump (just putting hose on to the pump will do that) it will affect different pumps in different ways**, better quality pumps will keep delivering higher volumes of water for longer.**

You can check out the flow rate stats on the back of most pumps, and they will tell you exactly what that pump will give you at what height. **Remember that the output is measured from the water's surface.** Many people believe that you measure this from the bottom of the pond, but that’s not the case.

Also keep in mind, that narrower pipes and longer pipe runs will have an affect on all pond pumps.

Think of the difference between trying to blow through a 3-metre-long drinking straw and your vacuum hose (don’t do it! Just **think about it)**

If you’ve got to pump a long way (10m or more) go for a bigger diameter pipe and a better quality pump.

Head pressure is the amount of force applied on a pump as it lifts water above the waters surface. Usually, pumps display graphs showing the reduction in their output at 1-metre intervals. It is worth noting that the length of pipe used also has an effect.

10 metres of pipe length increases head pressure by 1 metre

Build quality

I think we have all done the weight test at some point in our lives! If something feels heavy, it tends to be better quality. Whilst there are some unscrupulous manufacturers in other industries that try and cheat, I don’t believe that such behaviour goes on in the pump world.

There are a number of ways you can assess the build quality of a pump, the weight, the type of plastic that is used, how robust and easy to open the pump casing is, and even the packaging. But, how important this is ultimately is debatable, after all, how is the type of plastic used going to affect

your day-to-day usage of the pump?

It's important to take note of the size of the holes in the pump casing, **The bigger the holes, the larger the solids that will pass through, the more robust the pump has to be and the fewer times you will have to take the pump out of the pond to clean it.**

Now, something that takes up less of your time and effort IS something to take note of.

If you look at the housing on any of the Aquamax eco premium pumps, you can almost put your little finger through the holes. There is very little, that can block these pumps up, and they are going to need the least cleaning of all of the pumps on the market today.

Functionality

There are a number of additional features offered on pumps these days, but just because a pump offers variable speed control, doesn't necessarily mean you have to pay a high premium. Infact, the Evolution Aqua Vari pumps are one of the most affordable pumps on the market today. If this feature is top of your shopping list then its difficult to look beyond these pumps. It gives you a way of electronically adjusting the flow rate to get your desired results. Reducing the flow rate also reduces the running cost.

Typically, you need less flow in the winter and more in the summer. If you're after something really unique then the aquamax eco premium range can be connected via a special data cable to Oase's range of garden control systems.

In short, it's possible to control you pond pump from your phone!

Some pumps also offer an additional input, so you can draw water from an additional location such as a surface skimmer. This often confuses people as it looks like the pump has two outlets.

Some pumps have made the design of their pump casing easy to get into, which is a nice feature when you're cleaning, or in my case demonstrating! It's a pain having to hunt down a screwdriver when you just want to show someone the pump inside the casing.

Nearly all pumps can be used submersibly or externally, but please check on the packaging or with an assistant to make sure.

All pumps legally have to come with 10 metres of cable and they do not come with a three-pin plug. This is a piece of legislation that means any item that is designed to be used outdoors permanently

should not have a plug on the end, I suppose this is to encourage you to get an electrician to wire it in for you.

A pump IS just a pump

Personally, I feel a pump just has one job to do. I don't want to control it from my phone, I don't want to keep messing around with the speed, I just want it to do its job well, efficiently and last a long time.

For me, the most relevant advancement of pond pump features in 30 years (the last "sliced bread moment was when they stopped needing sponges as prefilters) is OASE's Seasonal Flow control (SFC) I kid you not, this has genuinely got me questioning how we use pumps in store and how I use them at home. It really is something I can not afford to overlook.

Each of the Aquamax eco premium pumps now comes with an SFC switch, which if engaged, enables the pump to intelligently vary the flow based on water temperature, dropping down to around 50% flow rate (and electricity) consumption in winter.

You could easily simulate this with a variable speed pump yourself (I personally don't have the time or the memory to get this done!) but this pump wizardry does it all for you!

Engaging this SFC features (and why wouldn't you!) saves you even more money on an already incredibly economical pump. Infact I am 100% certain that this makes the aquamax eco premium pumps the most economical pumps on the market today.

The graph below shows the AUTOMATIC adjustment in wattage for each of the pumps in the range and the running costs of those pumps both with SFC engaged and without.

Whilst I also have to consider the initial cost, our current electricity bill is nearly £7000 per month, so anything that reduces that is worth a second and third look!

A pump is not just a pump..

This article may have seemed at times, like an advert for the Oase Aquamax eco premium pumps, but the title is "why are pond pumps so expensive?" and whilst the manufacturer won't like me saying this, the Aquamax eco premium pumps are THE most expensive pumps we sell, so they were always going to feature heavily!

However, being expensive, is only a bad thing if there is no justification for it If something is built well, lasts a long time, does its job properly and saves you money on your electricity bill, it should be more expensive than other pumps, and if it wasn’t, wouldn’t you be just the slightest bit suspicious?

I am absolutely sure that spending £400 on a pond pump when you could spend half that is not going to be the right choice for everyone, if it was, there would be only one pump range on the shelf! But, armed with the information in this article you can see why some pond pumps are so expensive and have the confidence to choose the right pump for you.

Take a look at the pond pumps available