

OWNER'S MANUAL

# Fluidbead<sup>®</sup> Filter

by Fluidart<sup>®</sup>



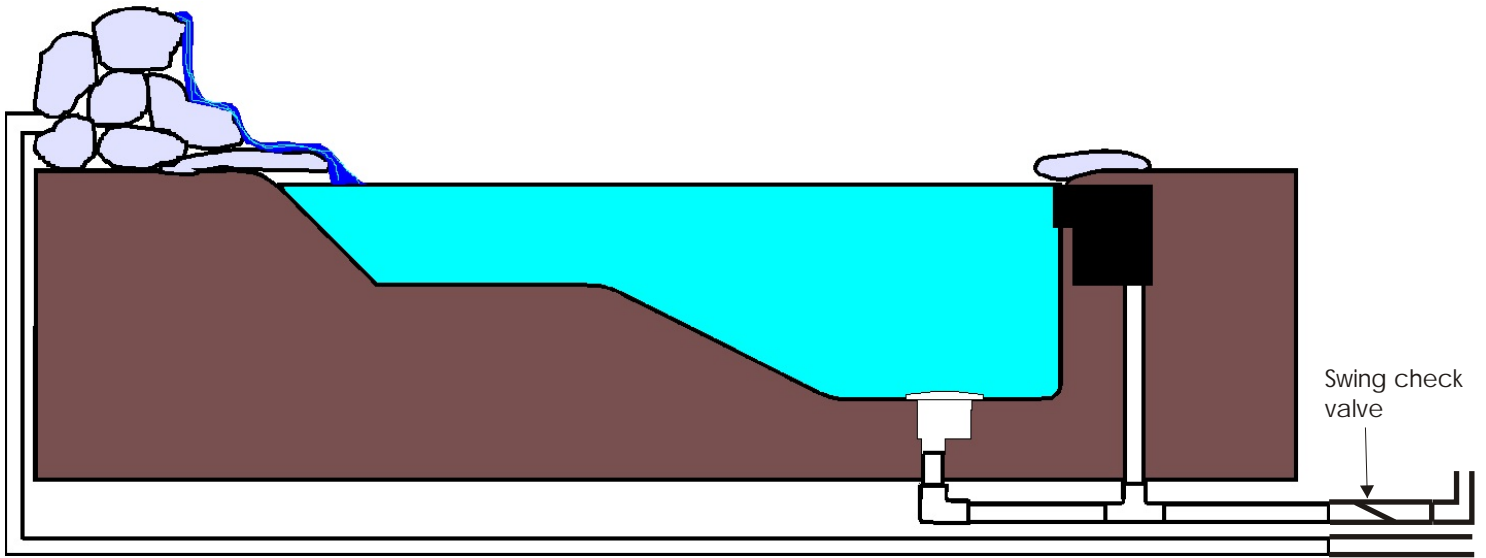
# Fluidart Technologies Bead Filter Owners Manual

**Congratulations on making the smart choice!**

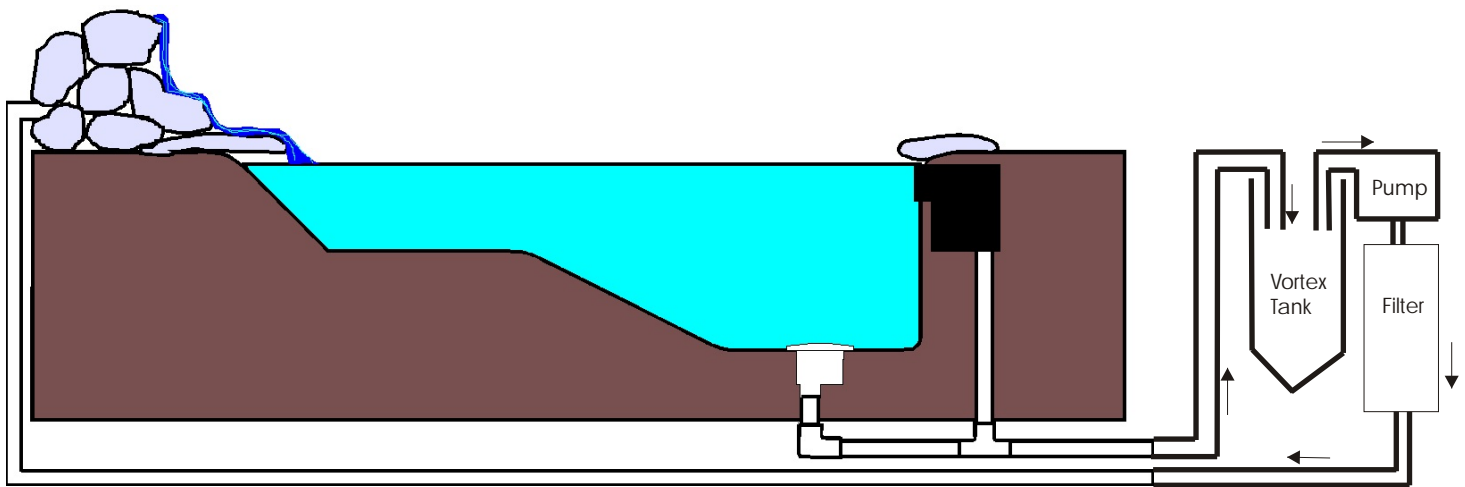
**Fluidart Technologies filtration systems are designed with the pond owner in mind. Our filtration systems are unparalleled in quality, performance, ease of operation, and maintenance. We are certain that you will have many years of happy KOI keeping with our system.**

**Contact us at [info@fluidart.com](mailto:info@fluidart.com) or phone 1-888-499-3852  
or 405-843-9060**

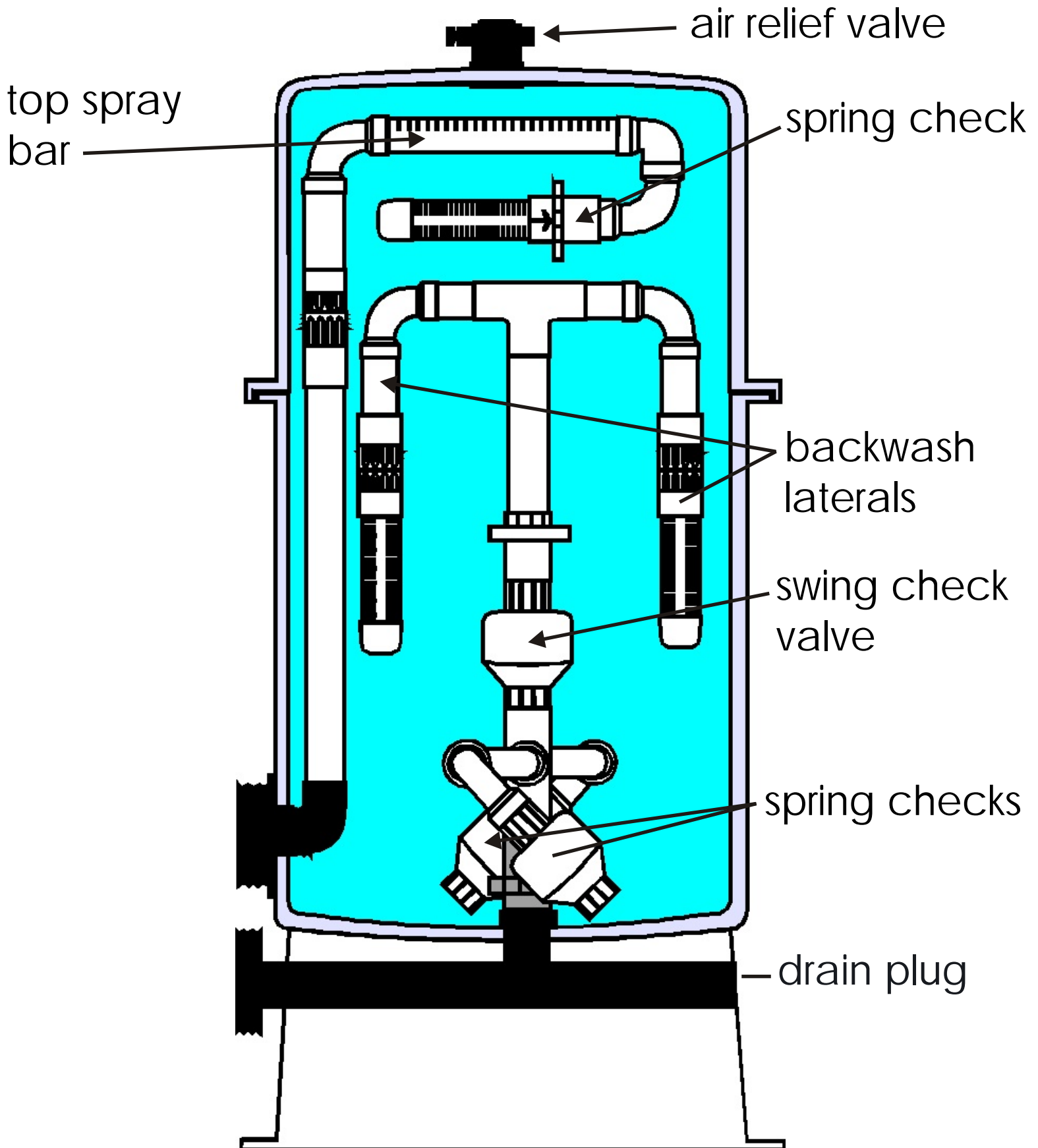
# Suggested installation of Fluidart Filtration System



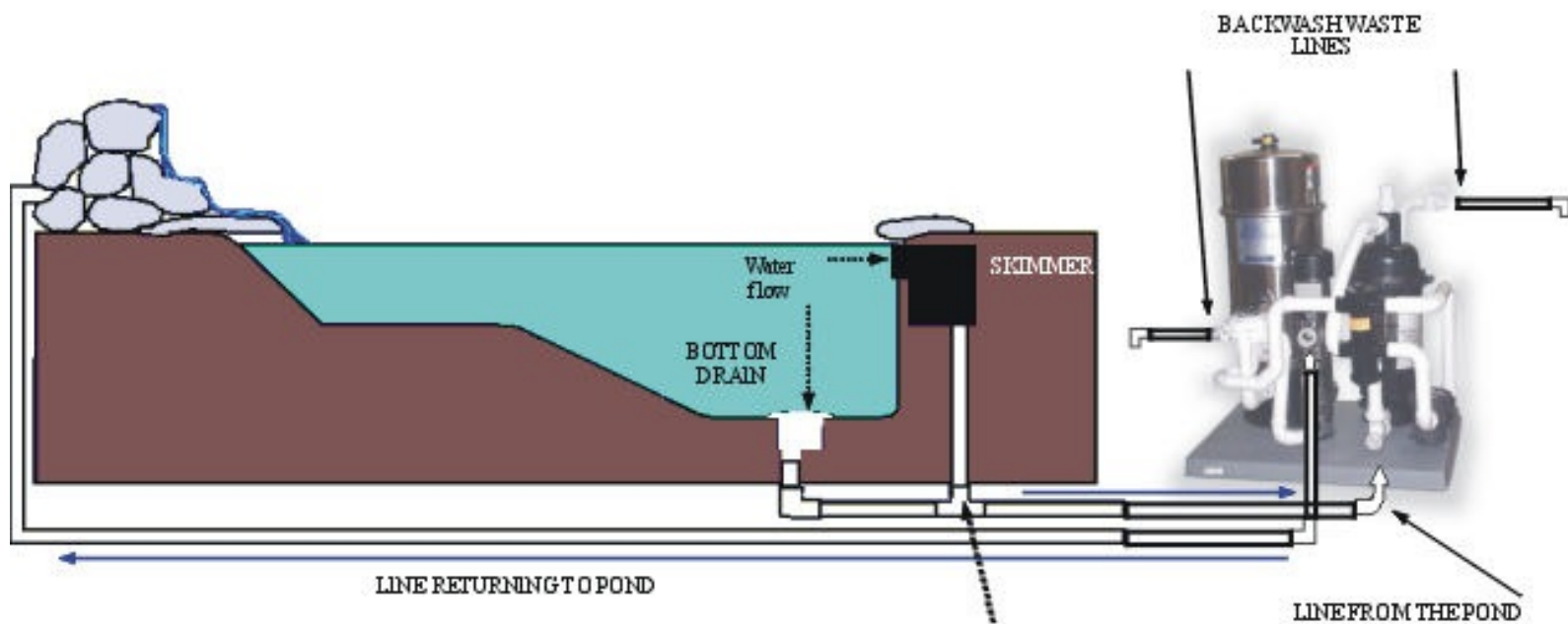
Swing check valve installed below water level in an easily accessed location will make keeping the pump and Turbovortex primed much more easy.



# FLUIDBEAD INTERNAL



# Typical installation of FluidArt Ultimate System



THIS T MAY BE SUBSTITUTED FOR A 3 WAY MIXING VALVE AND MOVED CLOSER TO THE EQUIPMENT PAD. THIS WILL ENABLE YOU TO VARY THE AMOUNT OF FLOW COMING FROM THE BOTTOM DRAIN AND SKIMMER.

# Introduction to Bead Filtration

## How long have bead filters been in use?

Bead filters have been around since the mid-70's and got their start in the food fish industry. Bead filters have been tested at various universities around the country, including Louisiana State University and Langston University in Oklahoma. In these tests, bead filters outperformed other filtration systems, when considering both biofiltration and clarification.

## What is the theory behind bead filter operation?

Bead filters accomplish two goals, one being water polishing (solids capture) and the other being biofiltration. Other filtration systems accomplish these goals, but are much larger and more difficult to clean. The advantage of the bead filter is that it provides a home for beneficial bacteria with high surface area for a large colony per cubic foot and fine particulate straining all within the same vessel. The other big advantage the bead filters have over other types of filters is that they are much easier to clean. This makes the hobby of KOI or pond keeping much more enjoyable, with less work involved in maintaining a healthy environment for the fish.

## How does a bead filter perform Mechanical Filtration?

Mechanical filtration or clarification is the process of removing suspended solids from water. Suspended solids in a recirculating system are generally small particles of undigested food, bacteria, and algae. These solids tend to reduce the clarity of water and cause problems in consuming tremendous amounts of oxygen, also needed by our beloved fish. Bead filters remove solids from water by different mechanisms. Physical straining is probably the most dominant mechanism removing larger particles (>50 microns). Finer particles (<20 microns) are removed at a lower rate by a process called bioabsorption. The particles are captured by bacterial biofilm on the surface of the bead. Studies show that bead filters capture 100% of particles >50 microns and 48% of particles in the 5-10 micron range per pass. The more passes the more solids captured.

**\*\*Important\*\*** in order for the bead filter to perform FINE micron straining it **MUST** be fully colonized with bacteria. Depending on the temperature this can take up to 4-6 weeks, at temps. above 60-65 degrees F.

## How does a bead filter perform Biofiltration?

Biofiltration depends on the establishment of a colony of bacteria on the surface of the beads large enough to convert dissolved toxic nitrogenous waste to harmless compounds. When the bacteria are given the proper environment, they grow in a thin biofilm on the surface of each bead. Each cubic foot of beads contain about 600,000 beads. This is one of the secrets of the bead filters success--high surface area per cubic foot for a large bacterial colony per cubic foot of filter media. The two most common types of bacteria are, *Nitrosomonas* which is responsible for the break down of ammonia in the system. The next is *Nitrobacter*, which is responsible for the breakdown of nitrite into relatively harmless nitrate.

**\*\*Important\*\*** in order for the bead filter to perform Biofiltration the beads must be colonized with a large enough colony to handle the load of dissolved ammonia presented to it. This may take up to 4-6 weeks at temps. above 60-65 degrees. Until the colony has grown large enough, the pond owner **MUST** be responsible for monitoring the levels of ammonia and nitrites in the pond water and taking appropriate measures to correct dangerously high levels.

## How do you size a bead filter?

When we start talking bead filter size, usually the first thing said is "I have a \_\_\_ gallon pond. What size filter do I need?" This just gets the conversation rolling. The next question should be, "How many fish do you plan to keep in the pond?". Fish have to eat and what it really boils down to is how many pounds of food is the pond keeper going to feed per day. The larger the fish load and the more food that will be fed, the larger the filter needs to be. A good rule of thumb when dealing with bead filters is this: 1cu. ft. of beads will handle the solids capture and nitrification of up to one lb. of food per day. 100lbs of fish fed at 1% body weight or 50lbs of fish fed at 2% body weight. This is feeding 35% protein food. Water quality and clarity can be achieved by adjusting feeding rates and/or stocking densities.

## What pump do I use with my filter?

Almost any out of pond pump will work with a FLUIDART FILTER. 2 speed pumps have proven to be favorites among many bead filter owners. 2 speed pumps have the versatility of running on low for normal filtration and saving energy dollars, while using high for backwashing. High is also great to have when you are having friends over and you want your waterfall to really roar!

# Fluidbead Filter Installation Instructions

1. Remove the filter from the box and locate the package that contains a tool with a 40 degree bend, it is used for opening the filter vessel. NOTE-- We recommend that you purchase two large sets of vise grip type pliers or channel lock type pliers to aid in putting the lid of the filter back in place. This will be explained.
2. Open the filter vessel by loosening the lock ring around the filter and using the opening tool to pry the lid up and off. Use caution not to damage the rubber gasket under the lid.
3. Position the base at the site of installation. Be sure that this is a level spot with full and easy access to all sides of the filter. We recommend that the filter be installed on a pad of some type to prevent settling.
4. Inspect the internals of the filter for shipping damage. You will note that there are plastic zip lock bands on the internals to hold them in place during shipping. Cut these and discard as they are not needed
5. Add the 2 boxes of sinking beads first to the tank then the 2 boxes of floating beads second.
6. Put the lid back on the filter. First attempt to push down firmly. If the top does not seat into place, try this trick:



- push the back of the top of the filter into place so that the lower edge is down over the gasket.
- squeeze and lock into place with a set of vise grip type pliers. Leave these attached.
- move to the front of the filter and squeeze the front into place with another set of large vise grip or channel lock pliers. The top should "pop" into place.
- the pliers can be removed and the top should remain in place while you attach the locking band to the tank.
- Note- be sure that there are no beads on the gasket or on either edge of the filter tank top and bottom, as they will prevent a water tight seal from being formed.

7. Attach the multiport valve. Be sure that the "O" rings are properly positioned. **\*\*important\*\*** Hand tighten the unions, do not use a wrench as you may crack the outer ring by over tightening.
8. Make pipe connections. The pressure (pump) line, return line, and waste line connections are clearly labeled on the valve. **\*\* Important \*\*** Install a swing check valve on the suction line from the pond to the pump. Install this below water level and you will have much less trouble priming your pump. See ideal

**installation diagram at the front of the manual. Be sure to plumb the waste water away from the site, to prevent settling of the filter system from moist ground.**

**9. Insert the section of PVC pipe that came with the filter into the upper union of spring check valve for the blower attachment. Glue this union. Then slide the blower down onto this pipe and secure with set screw. (Do Not Glue). When the blower is turn on the spring check valve will open and allow pressurized air into the tank for bead agitation.**

**\*\* Special note \*\* When lubricating connections, gaskets, or valves only use silicone based lubricants. Do not use petroleum-based lubricants. Magic Lube works well and can be located at most pool and spa stores.**

# **Fluidbead Filter Operating Instructions**

Now that your filter is installed and running there are a few simple things that you need to know and understand.

## **FILTER MATURATION**

This has been stated earlier, but is very important. It takes 4-6 weeks of operation at temperatures above 60-65 degrees F. before there is a large enough colony of bacteria to handle the bioconversion of ammonia and fine particulate straining. During this transition period, the pond owner must watch the ammonia and nitrite levels in the pond. If they become dangerously high, steps should be taken to correct the problem, such as a water change. Also during this period fine particulate straining will not be fully mature and you may notice your water being less polished than you would like. Both of the above issues will improve with time and the growth of the bacterial colony. This will occur with any type of bead filter used.

## **ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT STERILIZERS**

Bead filters will remove suspended particles down to 5-10 microns in size. However, some algae particles are smaller than 5 microns and will not be removed by the beads. These tiny algae cells will give the water a green cast and affect the clarity of the water. If the pond owner wants crystal clear swimming pool clarity, then a UV-light is needed. UV-lights will also remove many harmful bacteria and decrease the suspended bacterial counts in the water. We recommend the use of UV-lights for the above reasons.

## **BACKWASH INSTRUCTIONS**

When you first start up your filter, we recommend that you let it run for two weeks before you perform your first backwash. After that, once a week during the warm season should be all that is needed. During the winter months backwashing can be reduced to as little as once every 2-3 weeks. To perform a backwash, do the following:

### **Pre-Backwash Instructions**

- 1. Open Sludge Drain for 15-20 seconds with Pump ON, then close drain.**
- 2. Turn Pump OFF.**
- 3. Turn Multiport to Backwash position.**
- 4. Turn Pump ON for 10-15 seconds.**
- 5. Turn Pump OFF.**

### **Backwash Instructions**

- 1. Move Multiport to Rinse position.**
- 2. Turn the blower on for 1-2 minutes.\***

3. **Open Air Relief valve.**
4. **Turn Pump ON for 10-15 seconds.**
5. **Turn Pump OFF.**
6. **Move Multiport to Backwash position.**
7. **Turn Pump on until water runs clear.**
8. **Turn Pump OFF.**
9. **Repeat Steps 1-8 as needed.\*\***

**\* While the blower is agitating the beads you should be able to hear the beads hitting the inside of the tank. It should sound like individual beads and not clumps. Running the blower longer than 1-2 minutes at a time can cause overheating and damage the blower.**

**Note: Never run blower and pump at the same time.**

**\*\* To achieve a thorough backwashing, you may need to repeat steps 1-8 several times. Note: Be aware that large fluctuations in water temperatures from replacing too much water too quickly can cause stress and/or death in fish.**

#### **Post Backwash Instructions**

1. **Move Multiport to Rinse position.**
2. **Turn Pump ON.**
3. **Open Sludge Drain until water runs clear.**
4. **Turn Pump OFF.**
5. **Move Multiport to Filter position.**
6. **Turn the Pump ON.**
7. **Add Dechlorinator to Pond as needed.**

**\*Note\* If you leave your filter unbackwashed for two or more weeks, it is a good idea to do an extra long blower treatment on the beads.**

**\*Word of Caution\* If you leave your filter unbackwashed for extended periods of time, and you live in an area with relatively soft water, you may want to buffer your pond water. The bacteria in the filter can consume enough alkalinity in the water to cause a dangerous pH drop. Total alkalinity should be kept above 80ppm to avoid potentially dangerous shifts. To increase alkalinity, add sodium bicarbonate, change the water, or add a commercially prepared pH Buffer.**

## **INTERNAL INSPECTION**

**We recommend that twice a season you inspect the output laterals, backwash laterals, and the condition of the beads. With the Fluidbead filter this can easily be done by removing the upper portion of the filter. To remove the upper lid of the filter, do the following:**

- 1. Backwash your filter then turn off the pump and leave the valve in the backwash position.**
- 2. Open the air release valve at the top of the filter. You will notice air rushing into the filter. This represents water draining out of the filter.**
- 3. When air stops being sucked into the filter, most of the water has drained out and it is safe to open the filter. Failure to drain the water, will result in a very difficult time getting the lid off and the spillage and loss of a significant amount of beads. Not to mention causing a huge mess.**
- 4. Loosen and remove the outer lock ring. Now using the opening tool that came with the filter, carefully pry open the lid. It works best if you start working your way around the tank with the tool, being careful not to damage the rubber gasket.**
- 5. When loose, use the air release valve to start lifting the upper lid off the base. As you are lifting the lid, tap the side in one or two locations to knock beads loose. This will cause them to fall down into the container and prevent spillage.**
- 6. Now inspect the beads. Do they look clean after the backwash? Are there areas of caked beads? If you find areas of dirty beads or caked beads, you may need to adjust the length of time that you use the blower, or increase the backwash time, or possibly the backwashing frequency. At this point you will need to remove the beads to another watertight vessel so that the backwash laterals can be inspected. Scoop out or vacuum out the beads with a shop vac down to the level where the backwash laterals come into view.**
- 7. When the beads have been removed, wipe any beads stuck to the output laterals off and inspect them. Make sure that they clear of any obstructions. If there is material inside the laterals, they can be unscrewed and removed. A baby bottle brush cleaner works well for removing internally trapped solids. Replace when done.**
- 8. Next, inspect the backwash laterals as above and remove if needed for easier cleaning. Replace when done.**

9. Now replace the beads that were removed earlier. If they were dirty, rinse them before replacing them.
10. Replace the lid using the technique described in the installation instructions for putting the lid back in place. Pay attention to the position of the air release valve so that it is pointed in the direction you wish.
11. When the lid is back on, with the air release valve open, move the filter valve to the Filter position and turn on the pump. When water comes out of the air release valve, close the valve and perform another backwash and rinse cycle before going back to filtration. Now you're done.

## **MEDICATING YOUR POND**

Sometime during your career as a pondkeeper you may need to medicate your pond with chemicals that will harm the bacterial colonies on the filter media. To insure that they are not damaged follow these simple steps:

1. Do a good backwash on the filter then turn off the pump.
2. Move the valve to the "recirculate position". This will cause the water to bypass the filter while you're treating your pond. Turn your pump back on.
3. Open the the drain plug at the bottom of the filter and then the air release valve at the top of the filter. Water will start draining out of the filter without loss of any beads. The bead pack will now be surrounded with air instead of water. This will prevent any bacterial loss from lack of oxygen. The beads will stay moist for several days.
4. When the medication period is over, close the drain plug, but leave the air release valve open. Turn off the pump and move the handle to the filter position. Now turn on the pump. You will notice air "whistling" out of the air release valve as the tank refills with water. When water sprays out of the air release valve turn off the pump. Do a quick backwash and rinse, then go to filter mode.

**\*Note\*** Depending on the chemicals used, it is advisable to do a 50% water change before starting the filter back up. Check with your dealer.

## **WINTERIZING YOUR FILTER**

If you live in an area where you experience hard freezing, you may decide to shut your filter down for the winter. Do the following:

- 1. Do a good backwash of the filter. Move the multiport valve to the "winter" position.**
- 2. Turn off your pump and open the drain plugs on the pump strainer basket.**
- 3. If you have a Turbovortex on your system, open the drain plug at the base of the filter and open the priming cap, to drain the water from the tank. Loosen all connections so that any remaining water can drain out.**
- 4. With the Fluidbead filter, water will not totally drain out of the filter. Open the tank as described in the filter inspection section. Scoop or vacuum out all the beads and water into another vessel. Replace the beads. Now close the tank and wait until spring.**
- 5. Loosen all connections and drain exposed pipes, so that no water will be trapped. This is especially important for your UV lights!**

**In the Spring:**

- 1. Tighten all the connections that you loosened in the Fall.**
- 2. Close the drain plug on the Turbovortex and the pump strainer basket. Fill the Turbovortex half full of water. Replace the Bio-Balls and replace the lid being careful to not overtighten the lock ring. Prime the Turbovortex and the pump strainer basket. When full close.**
- 3. Move the multiport valve to the filter position and open the air release valve at the top of the filter. Turn on the pump. When water comes out of the air release valve at the top of the filter, shut it and turn off the pump. Now do a good backwash and rinse before going to the filter mode.**

**\*Note\* The bacterial colony on the beads in the filter will take some time to get back up to full capacity. During the first few weeks of operation in the spring, it is a good idea for the pond owner to do frequent checks of the ammonia and nitrite levels.**

# **Trouble Shooting**

## **Decrease in water flow**

**1. If you notice that your water flow is decreasing the most likely cause is that the filter needs to be backwashed. The bead filter is designed to trap solids and does it very well. When fully loaded with solids, the filter may restrict flow. Perform a backwash and rinse.**

**2. If after backwashing the filter the water flow is still low, next check the strainer basket on the pump. Be sure that it is clean and replace.**

**3. If you have a TURBOVORTEX on your system. Perform a backwash. Pay attention to the amount of water flow available while backwashing the TURBOVORTEX. This water is coming straight from the pond. If there is little flow, then you have a supply problem, meaning that the bottom drain, return line, or the skimmer is in need of cleaning. If these are clean and clear then check the impellers on the pump to make sure that there are not any objects trapped that would decrease their rpm. If there is plenty of flow while backwashing the TURBOVORTEX, then the flow restriction is after the pump.**

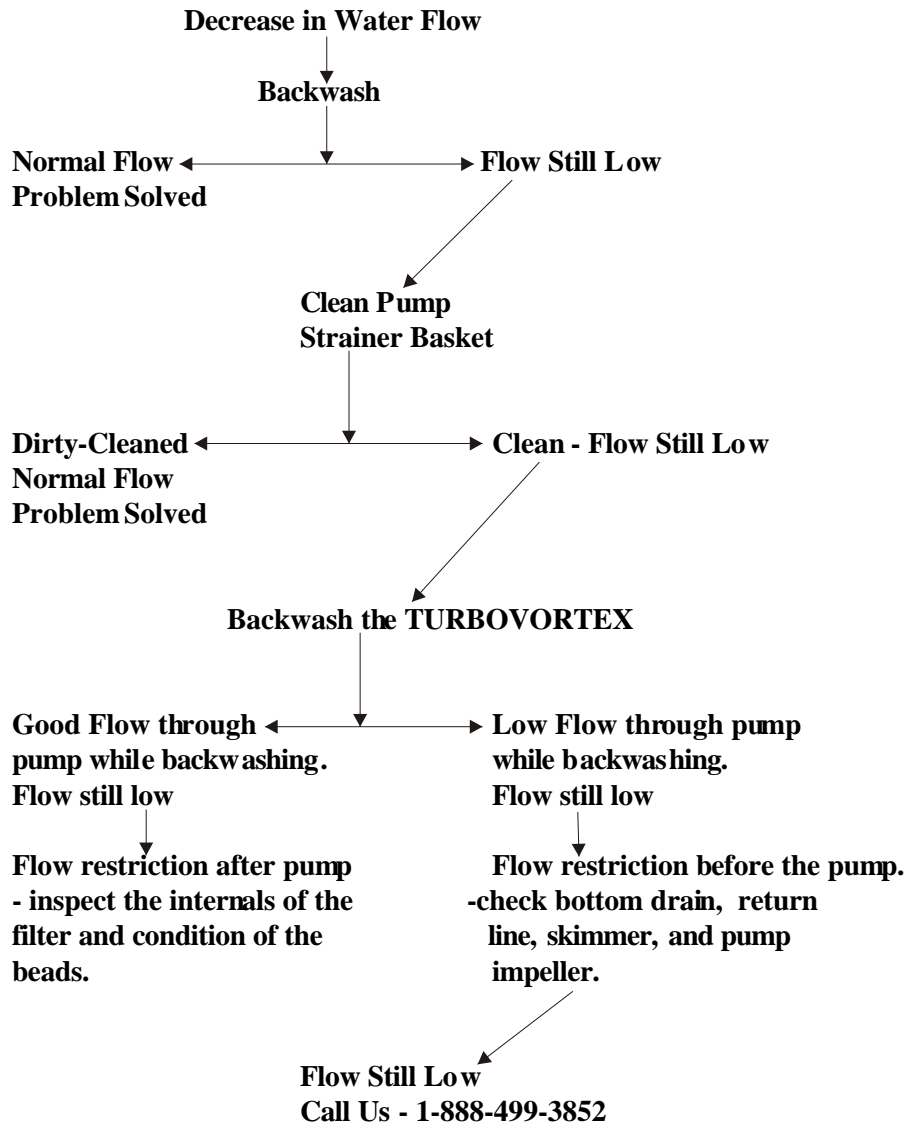
**4. If flow is still low after backwashing the TURBOVORTEX and there was plenty of flow through the pump, then you need to inspect the internals of the filter.**

**Check to see if the laterals are clear of obstruction and that the beads are not caked into large clumps. When the bead pack gets "gelled" they are hard to break apart with backwashing and doing a blower treatment. They may need to be manually broken apart. When the beads are gelled they tend to cause "Channeling," which means that the bead pack is totally clogged and water will follow paths of little resistance through or around the bead pack. When channeling is occurring you will notice that after backwashing the filter quickly clogs and flow slows in intervals that used to take 1-2 weeks, now flow slows in 2-3 days. Follow the directions in the internal inspection section of the filter operation section of the manual.**

**5. If you follow the above steps and your flow is still low, PLEASE, call us at 1-888-499-3852**

**6. See the following page for a quick flow chart of the above directions**

# Trouble Shooting

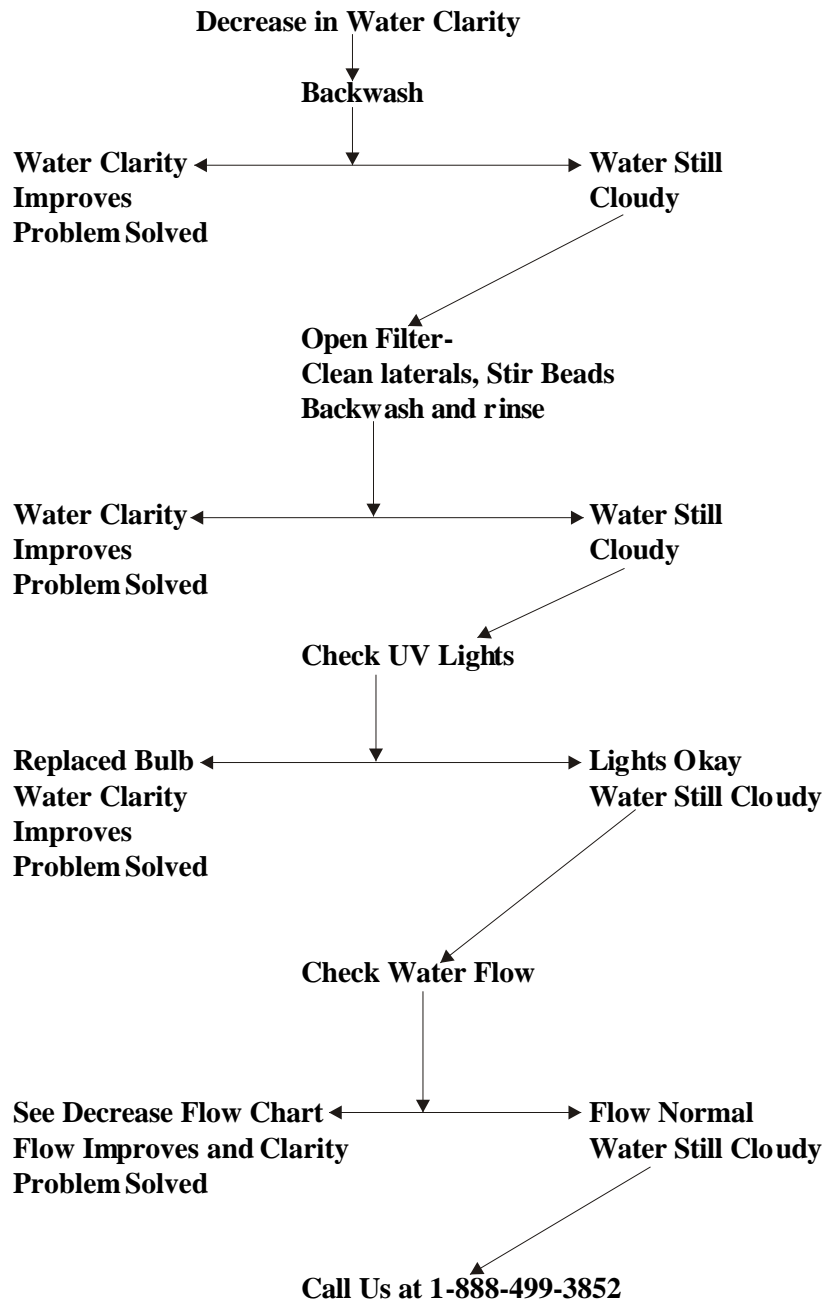


# **Trouble Shooting**

## **Decrease in water Clarity**

- 1. If your filter has a mature bacterial colony, which could take up to 4-6 weeks at temps. above 60-65 degrees F., and your water quality and clarity have been good then decreases, the first thing to do is a good backwash and rinse. Spend an extra amount of time with the blower agitation of the beads.**
- 2. If you clarity does not improve or improves then decreases quickly, open the filter and inspect the internal condition of the laterals and the beads. If the beads are gelled and channeling is occurring, then the water will bypass most of the bead pack and no mechanical filtration will occur. Manually break up the beads and make sure the laterals are clear of obstruction.**
- 3. If your water clarity does not improve, and you have UV-lights on the system, check to see if the bulbs are still working. Depending on the bulb, some UV-light bulbs will only have killing power for six months of continuous run. Others will last for a year or more. Check to see when they were last changed and replace if needed. They should be changed at least once a season.**
- 4. If your clarity does not improve, check the water flow out of the system. The entire pond water volume should be turned over through the filter system at least 3-4 times per day. If turn over time is slow then the amount of solids that the filter can capture will decrease. Check to make sure that there are no flow restrictions. Follow the low flow trouble-shooting chart. Also make sure that your pump is large enough to move the amount of water needed for enough turn overs through the filter.**
- 5. If after following the above suggestions and the clarity is still off, PLEASE call us at 1-888-499-3852 or your dealer.**

# Trouble Shooting



## **Trouble Shooting**

### **High Ammonia and Nitrite with previously stable state**

**If your pond has been up and running at warm temperatures (60-70 F) for six or more weeks and your ammonia and nitrite levels have been previously controlled, but you experience a spike in the ammonia level try the following:**

- 1. Perform an extra long blower treatment on the bead pack and an extra long backwash. If the bead pack becomes totally clogged with solids, the available surface area for bioconversion drops significantly. Backwashing will open up the active surface area and bioconversion will resume.**
- 2. If after backwashing the ammonia levels are still high, open the filter. Check the laterals to make sure they are clear, stir the beads to break up any gelled areas and then backwash.**
- 3. If ammonia levels are still high, consider how much food is being fed to the fish. One cubic foot of mature beads can handle around one pound of 35% protein food per day. Check to see how many cubic feet of beads are in your filter and compare that with how much food your feeding.**
- 4. If ammonia levels are still high, check the flow rate through the filter. The entire volume of the pond should be turned over through the filter 3-4 times per day. If the flow is down for some reason, bioconversion of ammonia will also slow. If you find the flow is in fact down, follow the troubleshooting flow chart for correcting low flows.**
- 5. If all the above are found to be in good condition, consider the fish load on the pond. This actually also relates to the above discussion about amount of food fed. If you have a heavily stocked pond you will also be feeding more to the fish and thus adding more nitrogen to the pond water that will have to be bioconverted. Again, consider your filter size and what your asking it to do.**
- 6. If the ammonia levels are still high, call us at 1-888-499-3852**

# Trouble Shooting

