

Title

Self-Cleaning Pre-Filter for a Water Circulation Pump

Background of the Invention

[0001] The present invention relates to submerged, low maintenance filters for pond water circulation pumps. More specifically, to a pre-pump filter system having a biological mechanism and an internal self-cleaning mechanism to actively filter water before it enters a circulation pump thus improving water quality and extending the life of the pump.

[0002] It is very difficult to keep clean an outdoor Koi pond, ornamental pond or other aquatic habitat stocked with fish (hereafter, a pond). A pond must be kept clean and aerated to maintain a healthy aquatic ecosystem, which typically requires a circulation pump and a water filtration system to move and clean the water. Small particles of debris and algae can pass through standard water circulation pumps, but larger pieces of debris quickly block these pumps, slow water flow and can eventually stop, damage or destroy the pumps. Most filters internal to or associated with pond water circulation pumps are primitive, complicated and require frequent cleaning, part replacement, and monitoring because they cannot effectively manage large quantities or pieces of debris.

[0003] One way of protecting the circulation pump is to use a pre-filter placed in line ahead of the pump to prevent large quantities and pieces of debris from entering the intake to the pump (hereafter, a pump intake pipe). However, pre-filters currently on the market are generally not well-suited for ponds because, when located in the pond, they are difficult to access, maintain and are unsightly. When the pre-filter is located outside the pond, the pump intake pipe frequently clogs. Pre-filters currently on the market are typically undersized and their designs actually encourage clogging, resulting in decreased water flow which strains the motor on the pond's circulation pump triggering a fail-safe shutdown of the pump or causing damage to the pump. In the case of a pre-filter rupture, the debris can quickly rush into the intake of the pump and completely compromise its operation.

[0004] What is needed is a submerged, low maintenance pre-filter that: (1) will withstand year-round use in an outdoor pond; (2) is of sufficient capacity that it will not easily clog; (3) can be submerged in a pond; (4) captures debris on a filtering surface so that it can be easily accessed by aquatic wildlife or mechanical cleaning methods; (5) can be raised above the bottom of the

pond to optimize circulation and allow access to aquatic wildlife; (6) is self-cleaning; (7) may be easily camouflaged without affecting its operation.

Summary of Invention

[0005] The present invention is a pond water circulation pump pre-filter unit (PFU). The PFU is submerged and provides structural support for camouflage, which gives the system a natural aesthetic look and provides a space for fish to hide from non-aquatic predators. The PFU comprises at least two cleaning systems: (1) biological cleaning mechanism; and (2) an internal self-cleaning mechanism. Specifically, the PFU comprises several filtering surfaces that form a repository that collects pond debris and algae on which fish, snails, frogs, and salamanders (larval stage), crayfish, bacteria, etc. (hereafter, aquatic creatures) feed, i.e., the biological cleaning mechanism. These filtering surfaces of the PFU also serve as the protective barrier that prevents large debris from entering the circulation pump yet allow smaller, harmless particles to pass unimpeded. The internal self-cleaning mechanism is a water spray mechanism used to clean the PFU from the inside-out without removing the PFU from the pond, draining the pond or physically accessing the PFU. Together, these features of the PFU improve the quality of the water in the pond, lower maintenance costs, and extend the life of the pond's water circulation pump.

Brief Description of Drawings

[0006] Figure 1 shows an angle view of the PFU with the top filtering surface removed.

[0007] Figure 2 shows a top view of the PFU operating in a pond.

[0008] Figure 3 shows a top view of a PFU partially camouflaged in a pond by ornamental rocks and a cutaway view of the PFU below.

[0009] Figure 4 shows an angle view of the PFU with the filtering surfaces in place.

[0010] Figure 5 shows a schematic of the PFU biological cleaning mechanism.

Detailed Description of the Invention

[0011] The present invention is a water circulation pump pre-filter unit (PFU) supported by a frame having legs for placement of the PFU inside and at the bottom of a pond. The frame supports the filtering surfaces elevated above the bottom of the pond making them easily accessible to fish in the pond, increasing the total available surface area of the filtering surfaces

to pond water, and making the filtering surfaces less prone to clogging. Additionally, by raising the filtering surfaces of the PFU off of the bottom of the pond, gravity will assist in pulling dense debris off of and down away from the PFU. The frame also provides support for camouflaging the PFU with risers and ornamental features, such as plants and pond rocks, without having these camouflaging materials touch the filtering surfaces or otherwise restrict water flow to the filtering surfaces or access by fish to the filtering surfaces.

[0012] The PFU comprises at least two cleaning systems: (1) a biological cleaning mechanism; and (2) an internal self-cleaning mechanism.

[0013] Regarding the biological cleaning mechanism, the PFU comprises several filtering surfaces that form a repository that collects pond debris on which aquatic creatures feed and provides a filter barrier to the water intake of the pond's circulation pump (hereafter a "screen cage"). More specifically, the screen cage prevents large debris from entering the circulation pump through the water intake system. The filtering surfaces of the screen cage are porous enough for water to freely flow through them, yet impermeable to large debris and other material that would be harmful to or overwork the circulation pump or the pond's other filter systems placed downstream from the pump. All of the mechanical parts of the PFU are located inside the screen cage providing maximum protection for the water intake to the pond's circulation pump and maximizing the available surface area to collect debris and algae, making it more difficult to clog. The suction created by the circulation pump holds debris and algae against the screen cage allowing fish to easily eat the debris and algae. By making each side of the screen cage accessible to the fish in the pond, the fish clean all sides of the screen cage by eating the debris and algae, masticating and/or digesting it into smaller particles that can pass safely through the pump.

[0014] The internal self-cleaning mechanism is a spray wash through a water supply pipe that complements the biological cleaning mechanism and doubles as a water supply for the pond. The water from the water source sprays the filtering surfaces of the screen cage from the inside, loosening impacted debris or carrying the debris away from the screen cage thereby opening spaces in the screen cage surface for water to pass. Additionally, agitating the debris in this way allows fish and other aquatic creatures to more readily access and consume it. The water source may be filtered and recycled pond water or water originating from an external source. This

second cleaning mechanism may be used to clean the PFU without removing the PFU from the pond, draining the pond or physically accessing the PFU.

[0015] Together, the biological cleaning mechanism and the internal self-cleaning mechanism improve the quality of the water in the pond and extend the life of a pump. Hereafter “circulation pump” and “pump” are used interchangeably. The biological cleaning mechanism and the internal self-cleaning mechanism do not necessarily operate at the same time, rather the internal self-cleaning mechanism may be used intermittently to spray clean the screen cage or loosen debris that has caked on the filtering surfaces over time, while the biological cleaning mechanism keeps the screen cage clean the rest of the time. The screen cage is designed to have a total free-flowing surface area on the filter surfaces that is equal to or greater than the diameter of the pump intake pipe.

[0016] **Figure 1** shows an angle view of one embodiment of a PFU **1** with the top filtering surface of the screen cage removed. This embodiment illustrates the PFU **1** has a pump intake pipe **10**, a water supply pipe **20**, screen cage **80**, and a frame **90**. The pump intake pipe **10** has a plurality of holes **101** and is a conduit that attaches to an intake of a circulation pump through which water is suctioned or pulled from the pond by a circulation pump. In the present invention, the water pulled from the pond must first pass through the filtering surfaces on the screen cage **80** of the PFU. The pump intake pipe **10** has a proximal end **10A** and a distal end **10B** and is attached on the proximal end **10A** to the pond’s water circulation pump through a first port **50**, which, in one embodiment, traverses the frame **90** and in another embodiment traverses the screen cage **80**. A tube, hose or other device may be used to connect the first port **50** to the circulation pump.

[0017] In one embodiment (not shown), the water supply pipe **20** has at least one water supply pipe extension **201** having a plurality of holes to disperse outflowing water. In another embodiment, the plurality of holes are capped with nozzles to control the outflowing water spray. In another embodiment, the at least one water supply pipe extension **201** has a rotating section **201A** and a non-rotating section **201B**, with a water motor **40** interposed between the sections. In another embodiment, the plurality of holes **202** are on the rotating section **201A** of the water supply pipe extension **201**. In one embodiment, the water motor **40** is hollow, containing a circular interior chamber with a series of paddle-like protrusions extending from a central spindle.

[0018] The water supply pipe **20** is a conduit for the inflow of water into the pond through the PFU **1**. Specifically, the water supply pipe **20** attaches to a garden hose or other water source through a second port **60** that, in one embodiment, traverses the frame **90**. In another embodiment, the frame is hollow and water fills the frame **90** before exiting the second port **60**. In another embodiment, the second port **60** traverses the screen cage **80**. This water supply pipe **20** and water supply pipe extensions **201** are located inside the screen cage **80** and, in another embodiment, traverses both the frame **90** and the cage **80**. In another embodiment, the water supply pipe **20** has at least two water supply pipe extensions **201** positioned on either side of the pump intake pipe **10**. In one embodiment, the water supply pipe **20**, water supply pipe extensions **201**, and rotating sections **201A** are PVC pipe. In another embodiment they are made of metal, plastic or other non-corrosive material.

[0019] When the water source is turned on, the water that enters the water supply pipe **20** travels to the water motor **40** which in turn causes the spindle on the water motor **40** to spin. This causes the paddles connected to the spindle to turn within the confines of the water motor **40**. The spindle is attached to the rotating section **201A** of the water supply pipe extensions **201** and causes the rotating section **201A** to turn. Water exits the rotating sections **201A** through the plurality of holes **202**, in one embodiment capped by nozzles **203**, spraying the outflowing water in specific directions from the inside of the screen cage **80** outward thus loosening debris that has settled on the outside surface of the screen cage **80**. In another embodiment, the nozzles direct high-pressure water flow to focused areas and the nozzles are rotated to cover the majority of the filtering surfaces. The design of the internal self-cleaning mechanism may be of any particular design so long as it pushes enough water from inside the screen cage to clean debris and algae off of the filtering surfaces. In other embodiments, this may be accomplished using one or more rotating pipes, one or more rotating plates, or by a series of nozzles that are turned on and off by a control mechanism. In one embodiment, a pressurized air source is used to augment the water source. In another embodiment, the PFU is treated with a protective coating to prevent growth of algae or biofilms on the PFU.

[0020] In another embodiment, the water motors **40** and rotating sections **201A** are eliminated from the PFU system. In one embodiment, this self-cleaning mechanism is an internal backwash using recycled, filtered water to clean the PFU. In an embodiment where an external water

source is used, the PFU also fills the pond with water replacing water lost due to splashing, evaporation, and/or leaks.

[0021] **Figure 2** illustrates a view of the PFU **1** operating in a pond **2**. This figure shows the pump intake pipe **10**, water supply pipe **20** water motors **40**, water supply pipe extensions **201** and rotating sections **201A** inside the screen cage **80**, a frame **90** having four leg supports **901**, a circulation pump **100** attached to the first port **50**, and a water source **110** attached to a second port **60**. The frame leg supports **901** elevate the screen cage **80** above the bottom of the pond. This makes the filtering surfaces of the screen cage **80** easily accessible to fish from the top and bottom of the screen cage **80**. In one embodiment, the legs **901** are adjustable with regard to height and placement under the frame **90**.

[0022] Hiding man-made components on the bottom of a pond can be done in several ways, for example a single large rock covering the components, plants, or even some type of black material that matches the pond liner. To create a completely natural look, it is desirable to cover the entire pond floor in rocks and plants. But, placing rocks or planters directly onto a pond liner can cause problems. While these rocks and plants increase overall surface area for beneficial bacteria, they can also create locations where water does not circulate and where the oxygen becomes depleted. In these low-oxygen areas, anaerobic bacteria can thrive and begin to compete with beneficial bacteria creating toxins that can harm other aquatic creatures in the pond. The PFU allows for the aesthetic appearance of a rock bottom pond, while still allowing water flow below and around the rocks, which promotes a healthy ecosystem. **Figure 3** shows a top view of a PFU partially camouflaged in a pond by ornamental rocks **120** and a cutaway view of the PFU below. As shown, however, these ornamental rocks **120** are not actually on the bottom of the pond, but rather form a false bottom creating a space between the ornamental rocks **120** and the pond liner below. The PFU, the pump and other man-made components are placed in this space, concealing them and achieving a natural presentation when viewed from above. The space also provides a sanctuary for fish to escape non-aquatic predators.

[0023] Placing the PFU under a false bottom of ornamental rocks creates a problem. Specifically, hidden under the rocks, the user cannot see or easily access the pump or PFU. This necessitates the active internal cleaning mechanism illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, an active water spray wash for the PFU, which is accessible without removing the PFU from the pond, draining the pond or physically accessing the PFU.

[0024] In one embodiment, risers or other supports **130** are placed on top of the submerged PFU. These risers **130** support the ornamental rocks **120** so that the rocks will not damage the PFU or cause a tear in the screen cage **80**. The risers **130** or other supports for the ornamental rocks **120** need to be made of materials that will not deteriorate or corrode in water. Sample materials include aluminum, stainless steel, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and polypropylene plastic, or any combination of these materials. In one embodiment, the risers **130** are made from an old plastic pallet. The ornamental rocks **120** are both decorative and protective. They also provide a safe space for fish to hide from non-aquatic predators – cats, birds, children, etc.

[0025] **Figure 4** shows a rudimentary embodiment of the PFU with the screen cage **80**. The screen cage **80** is a filtering surface comprising a plurality of filtering layers that include, for example, fine mesh screens (or “grates”) **801** supported by powder-coated wire shelving **803**. In this embodiment, the frame **90** and screen cage **80** are in the shape of a 3-dimensional rectangle screen cage **80** having a top **804**, a bottom **805**, front side **806**, back side **807**, a right end **808** and a left end **809**. The fine mesh screens **801** on the top **804** and bottom **805** surfaces are the filtering surfaces. The screens collect debris that can be eaten by aquatic creatures in the pond and/or cleared away using the internal cleaning mechanism. The screens provide easy access for aquatic creatures to consume, masticate, or otherwise break up the debris into smaller pieces that can safely pass through the pump.

[0026] In one embodiment, the right end **808** and left end **809** of the screen cage are formed by the PFU frame **90** with only the top **804** and bottom **805** of the screen cage being filtering surfaces. That is, the front and back sides are closed by the PFU frame **90** itself while top **804** and bottom **805** are filtering surfaces of the screen cage **80**. The PFU is, however, closed to large debris as the front side **806** and back side **807** are blocked by the PFU frame **90**. That is, any water from the pond must pass through the screen cage to enter the pump intake pipe **10**.

[0027] In another embodiment, the screen cage **80** completely surrounds the PFU **1** including its frame **90**. As with other embodiments, water passes through the filtering surfaces into the pump intake pipe **10** and out of the pond through the pond’s water circulation pump **100** and to the traditional water filter, wherein the water is treated and then returned to the pond **2**. In another embodiment, the screen cage **80** and/or the filtering surfaces have the shape of a cylinder, sphere, pyramid, cone, prism, or other polyhedron. In another embodiment, the screen cage **80** has a pleated surface to provide additional surface area along the filtering surfaces.

[0028] **Figure 5** is a schematic of the first cleaning mechanism of the PFU having aquatic creatures eat the debris deposited on the outside of the screen cage **80**, i.e., the biological cleaning mechanism. Fish have been videotaped cleaning the outside of the screen cage, and this cleaning by the fish reduces the frequency that the internal cleaning mechanism needs to be used. The internal self-cleaning mechanism (implemented simply by turning on the water source connected to the water supply pipe **20**) is needed only when the debris build-up on the outside of the screen cage **80** outpaces the appetite/eating capacity of and/or number of aquatic creatures in the pond. It is notable that Koi and goldfish are largely dormant in colder temperatures, so the frequency for using the internal self-cleaning mechanism may be temperature dependent. In one embodiment, the temperature of the pond **2** is controlled by adding warm water that is heated using solar panels and/or other methods of heating water known to those of ordinary skill in the art, to optimize the feeding activity of the aquatic creatures.

[0029] In one embodiment, the PFU has leg supports **901** built into the PFU. Support under the frame **90** allows the PFU to be placed at the bottom of a pond so that its filtering surfaces are not touching the bottom of the pond allowing free-flow of water and enough space for fish and other aquatic creatures to access the bottom surface of the screen cage **80**. In another embodiment, the legs or supports are provided separately and placed underneath the PFU.

[0030] The present design contemplates the use of Koi and goldfish because they are the most common types of ornamental pond fish, however, other species of fish and other aquatic creatures may be used so long as they will eat the debris deposited on the PFU. In the present embodiment, common goldfish and Koi populate the pond. Both are extremely hardy and can survive temperature extremes. Also, they're both omnivores, eating a wide variety of foods. Algae is one of their main and favored food sources. Other fish species are contemplated as long as they can survive the climate and would do the same work as Koi and goldfish to fulfill the biological cleaning mechanism of the PFU.

[0031] In one embodiment, the screen cage **80** is made of multi-layer-mesh material. It may be made with only one mesh layer. Whatever the mesh strength or number of layers comprising the screen cage **80**, the PFU should have sufficient strength and surface to distribute pressure over a wide area and to sustain function in places where high-point pressure loads can occur when the screen cage is dirty. This will vary pond to pond. The invention is not limited to ornamental ponds and may be used in any type of marine habitat where a water circulation pump

is used and fish are present. The PFU can be sized and scaled accordingly for use by one of ordinary skill in the art from ornamental backyard ponds to industrial-level fish farms. Anywhere a circulation pump is used, the combined cleaning mechanisms of the PFU will improve the quality of the water and extend the life of the circulation pump. Compared to commercially available systems, maintenance of the PFU is minimal.

[0032] In one embodiment, the PFU has tolerated internal self-cleaning water pressures of 92 psi, the unregulated pressure supplied by a local municipal water source. As for water pressure created by the circulation pump pulling water through the screen cage, the PFU has tolerated pressures created by a 3200 gallon per hour pump. Distributing that load over a wider area and improving the strength of the screen cage **80** will prevent excessive pump pressure from tearing the screen cage **80** and/or crushing the PFU.

[0033] In one embodiment, the PFU has a circulation pump enclosed within the screen cage. This would create an “all-in-one” unit.

[0034] Other system features of the present invention, as described in detail above, include: that the PFU draws water into the circulation pump from at least two sides. It may draw from more sides depending on the shape and design of the frame and screen cage. There is no filter media other than the filtering surfaces in the PFU. Water flows freely through the two surfaces directly into a single point, the port **50** of the pump intake pipe **10**. In one embodiment, the pump intake pipe **10** has a plurality of holes **101** to distribute the intake load across a wider area.

[0035] Particles that pass through the outside surfaces are small enough to pass easily through the pump without damaging it, thus there is no need for a filter media other than the filtering surfaces. Filter media would eventually clog the PFU and need to be pulled out, thus creating higher and more frequent maintenance. The PFU may work in concert with a biological filter outside the pond that uses filter media (foam mats and plastic bio-ball-like parts). The PFU is in line ahead of the pump to prevent over-sized debris from damaging the pump. The PFU is not intended to be a microbiological filter system, but rather a pre-filtering system.

[0036] Embodiments of this invention are described herein. Variations of those embodiments may become apparent to those having ordinary skill in the art upon reading the foregoing description. The inventors expect that skilled artisans will employ such variations as appropriate, and the inventors intend for the invention to be practiced other than as specifically described herein. Accordingly, this invention includes all modifications and equivalents of the

subject matter recited in the claims appended hereto as permitted by applicable law. Moreover, any combination of the above-described elements in all possible variations hereof is encompassed by the invention unless otherwise indicated herein or otherwise clearly contradicted by context.

[0037] While the disclosure above sets forth the principles of the present invention, with the examples given for illustration only, one should realize that the use of the present invention includes all usual variations, adaptations and/or modifications within the scope of the claims attached as well as equivalents thereof.

[0038] All references, including publications, patent applications, and patents cited herein are hereby incorporated by reference to the same extent as if each reference was individually and specifically indicated to be incorporated by reference and was set forth in its entirety herein.

[0039] The use of the terms “a” and “an” and “the” and similar referents in the context of describing an invention (especially in the context of the following claims) are to be construed to cover both the singular and the plural, unless otherwise indicated herein or clearly contradicted by context. The terms “comprising,” “having,” “including,” and “containing” are to be construed as open-ended terms (i.e., “including, but not limited to,”) unless otherwise noted. Recitation of ranges as values herein are merely intended to serve as a shorthand method of referring individually to each separate value falling within the range, unless otherwise indicated herein, and each separate value is incorporated into the specification as if it was individually recited herein. All methods described herein can be performed in any suitable order unless otherwise indicated herein or otherwise clearly contradicted by context. The use of any and all examples, or exemplary language (e.g., “such as”) provided herein, is intended merely to better illuminate the invention and does not pose a limitation on the scope of the invention (i.e., “such as, but not limited to,”) unless otherwise claimed. No language in the specification should be construed as indicating any non-claimed element as essential to the practice of the invention.

[0040] Those skilled in the art will appreciate from the foregoing that various adaptations and modifications of the just described embodiments can be configured without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. Therefore, it is to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced other than as specifically described herein.

What Claimed Is:

Claim 1. A filter device comprising:
a biological cleaning mechanism and an internal self-cleaning mechanism;
wherein the filter device is a pre-filter unit for a water circulation pump.

Claim 2. The filter device of claim 1 further comprising:
a pump intake pipe;
a water supply pipe;
a frame;
a first port used to connect the pump intake pipe to a circulation pump, said circulation pump providing a conduit for water out of the pond by suction of water;
a second port used to connect the water supply pipe to a water source, said water source providing a conduit for water into the pond;
at least one water supply pipe extension having holes;
a screen cage having an inside and outside surface; and
at least one fish that eats algae and debris.

Claim 3. the filter device of claim 2, the water supply pipe extension further comprising a rotating section and a non-rotating section, a water motor interposed between the rotating section and the non-rotating section, and wherein the holes are on the rotating section.

Claim 4. The filter device of claim 2, further comprising at least two water supply pipe extensions positioned on either side of the pump intake pipe and further comprising a rotating section and a non-rotating section on each of the at least two water supply pipe extensions, a water motor interposed between the rotating sections and the non-rotating sections, and wherein the holes are on the rotating sections.

Claim 5. The filter device of claim 4, wherein the water supply pipe, the pump intake pipe, water supply pipe extensions, rotating sections and the water motors are located inside the screen cage.

Claim 6. The filter device of claim 2, wherein the screen cage further comprises at least two filtering surfaces that form a repository to collect pond debris on which the at least one aquatic creature feeds.

Claim 7. The filter device of claim 6, wherein the filtering surfaces provide a protective barrier that prevents large debris from entering the circulation pump.

Claim 8. The filter device of claim 2, wherein the frame has leg supports to elevate the screen cage above the bottom of the pond.

Claim 9. The filter device of claim 8, further wherein the frame supports materials to camouflage the filter device.

Claim 10. The filter device of claim 2, wherein the circulation pump provides a suction of pond water that holds pond debris against the outside surface of the screen cage.

Claim 11. The filter device of claim 10, wherein the at least one aquatic creature cleans the outside surface of the screen cage by eating the algae and debris.

Claim 12. The filter device of claim 2, wherein the internal self-cleaning mechanism is a water source for the pond.

Claim 13. The filter device of claim 4, wherein water from the water source enters the water supply pipe and exits the nozzles in the rotating pipe extensions to spray clean the surfaces of the screen cage.

Claim 14. The filter device of claim 6, wherein the filtering surfaces are pleated.

Claim 15. The filter device of claim 6, wherein the at least two filtering surfaces comprise a plurality of filtering layers.

Claim 16. The filter device of claim 2, wherein the screen cage has the shape of a cylinder, sphere, pyramid, cone, prism, or other polyhedron.

Claim 17. The filter device of claim 2, wherein the temperature of the pond is controlled to optimize the feeding activity of the fish.

Claim 18. The filter device of claim 8, wherein the leg supports are adjustable.

Claim 19. The filter device of claim 15, further wherein the filtering layers are a mesh material.

Claim 20. The filter device of claim 2, wherein the device is used in a habitat for the at least one aquatic creature other than a pond.

Claim 21. The filter device of claim 5, wherein the circulation pump is inside the screen cage.

Claim 22. The filter device of claim 2, wherein the first port and the second port traverse the frame.

Claim 23. The filter device of claim 2, wherein the first port and the second port traverse the screen cage.

Claim 24. A method for cleaning water to extend the life of a water circulation pump comprising:

Filtering water debris using a pre-filter unit comprising a biological cleaning mechanism and an internal self-cleaning mechanism; wherein the pre-filter unit is a filter device for a water circulation pump.

Claim 25. The method of claim 24, wherein the filter device further comprises:
a pump intake pipe;
a water supply pipe;
a frame;
a first port used to connect the pump intake pipe to a circulation pump, said circulation pump providing a conduit for water out of the pond by suction of water;
a second port used to connect the water supply pipe to a water source, said water source providing a conduit for water into the pond;
at least one water supply pipe extension having holes through which water from the water source is expelled;
a screen cage having an inside and outside surface; and
at least one fish that eats algae and debris.

Claim 26. The method of claim 25, further comprising a pressurized air source augmenting the water source.

Claim 27. The method of claim 25, wherein the filter device is submerged in the water being cleaned.

Claim 28. The method of claim 25, wherein the internal self-cleaning mechanism is a water spray mechanism used to clean the pre-filter unit without removing the unit from the water being cleaned, draining the water, or physically accessing the unit.

Claim 29. An aquatic filtering system comprising:
a pre-filter unit;
a water circulation pump;
a water source; and
ornamental materials to camouflage the pre-filter unit;
wherein the pre-filter unit is in line ahead of the circulation pump;
wherein the pre-filter unit comprises a biological cleaning mechanism and an internal self-cleaning mechanism; and
wherein the pre-filter unit is a filter device for the water circulation pump.

Claim 30. The method of claim 29, wherein the filter device further comprises:
a pump intake pipe;
a water supply pipe;
a frame;
a first port used to connect the pump intake pipe to a circulation pump, said circulation pump providing a conduit for water out of the pond by suction of water;
a second port used to connect the water supply pipe to a water source said water source providing a conduit for water into the pond;
at least one water supply pipe extension having holes through which water from the water source is expelled;
a screen cage having an inside and outside surface; and
at least one aquatic creature that eats algae and debris.