



Touch 'n Foam Landscape Foam - Review

I'll start by saying 'Wow'. This stuff serves a purpose that can be rivalled by none. I first stumbled on the concept of using spray foam to fill voids in the aquatic environment some years back when I was following a showcase of a commercial build on one of the large koi forums. They were putting together superb structures with ease and just blasting in between the rocks with the foam; my immediate thought was where can I get this stuff?, a few days later I had given up the search and realised that there just wasn't a publically available product to achieve the same. I slapped my waterfall together, mainly slate, used some mortar, protected it with G4 sealer, great, job done!. Well no, not so great, a few months later the slight shifts of rock (just a few mm) broke the seal and the falls started to leak. Frantically patching up with silicone became a tedious monthly task. Even though I had lined the run, the water escaping was just too much to achieve a good result.

Some years on, a new house and another large pond build much to my better halves enjoyment....I found myself in the same dilemma, how to build a waterfall without leaks. Looking around the web, I found the Touch N' Foam on the AB Building products website after hearing about it on another forum. Before you go off and start doing your research on this product, you need to understand what it is designed to do, there will be no disappointment if you grasp the basics right from the get go.

The Touch 'N Foam does NOT provide a 100% water tight seal, it is a foam and will wick a small amount of water, this is the nature of the product. The foam is a decent construction material that will:

- Hold rocks together
- Bond to liner, cement, wood and concrete
- Alter the path of flow water would prefer to take
- Fill voids and direct 99.9% of water to where it is required

If you are familiar with the yellow DIY expanding foam, you will understand the concept. Where the Touch 'N Foam differs is in the colour (it's a dark grey) and the expansion. It does

not expand as much as the DIY foam, this is a good thing as you will have more of an idea of the quantity to use.

Warning, for the first 10 minutes, the foam remains very sticky, it will attach to anything including skin and clothes. Wear disposable gloves as you will not want it curing on your hands; it is very very difficult to remove without the proper solvent. This aside, it is remarkably easy to use. Just point in-between some rocks and pull the trigger...it is quite satisfying in actual fact, almost addictive.

If you are using the foam to build a water fall, I would recommend the following:

1. Do not use the foam as a water tight seal, it is not intended to hold 100% of water, just direct it.
2. ALWAYS lay a liner underneath your entire waterfall. Do not be tempted to miss this out; it is extremely important if you are to avoid water loss. Use a single piece of liner, not multiple pieces overlapped and make sure that any water that falls onto this liner will end up in the pond. Unless your falls is a vertical drop you will want to avoid water wicking up through overlapped layers of liner. Don't scrimp, use one bit and leave it much larger than you think. As you would with the pond, place fleece underlay down first to protect the liner.
3. Start your waterfall from the bottom upwards and leave the foaming until your entire construction is complete.
4. Leave plenty of slack in the liner so there is no tension, this will decrease the chances of tears and punctures.
5. Make sure that your foundation is solid and will not shift. If you are placing your rocks and liner on freshly dug earth it will be liable to shift as the voids of air are compressed out as the earth condenses back into a solid lump. Leave it for a few weeks, allow some rain to get on it and settle it out. Alternatively, use a builders tamp and spend plenty of time compacting the earth until you are satisfied any movement will be small. The bigger the mound of earth the more important this is. A 4ft high mound of freshly dug earth will collapse one or two feet depending on the consistency. Clay type earth will take much longer to settle but will provide a firmer foundation.
6. When you dig out the channel or flow path, always dig out more than you think you need. It is much easier to place the rocks on the liner and back fill than have to excavate with each placement.
7. Use rocks as large as you can safely handle as it will look more natural. Chose some very nice rocks or boulders for the header of your falls and place two large rocks on either side to direct the flow. Smaller rocks can be placed in between for a more

natural look. You can then use Touch 'N Foam in between these rocks to lock everything into place.

8. If possible, use a spillway. They can be sourced in the UK but can be obtained from the US with very little effort. These spillways are like giant buckets that are available with different spill sizes. Unlike just routing a hose from the pump to the top of the waterfall, these spillways will give a far more consistent flow. Ensure you use a spirit level for a level flow, you can even fill in between the spillway and rocks with the Touch 'N Foam.
9. Tilt each rock slightly forward so water will follow the path of least resistance and exit off the edge of the rock and down onto the next. Use the Touch 'N Foam to fill underneath over hanging rocks to ensure the water continues down to the pond and not behind the rocks.
10. Try to avoid areas that are likely to collect water as these will stagnate when the pump is switched off. The Touch 'N foam will perform best if it is used to direct water, not contain it. If you are building a header pool into your design, use a small diameter hose to allow the water to drain back down into the pond when the waterfall pump is switched off.
11. The Touch 'N Foam will fill very large voids, but... it is preferable to use smaller voids as they will provide a greater structural strength and look more natural. Typically try not to fill gaps bigger than an inch or two.
12. Do not under estimate the strength of the Touch 'N Foam, it will bond rocks together and provide a decent structure and will require quite a bit of strength to pull them apart again.
13. The Touch 'N Foam will bond better to cleaner surfaces so give your rocks a brush down and wash if necessary, leaving time to dry before applying the foam.
14. If you leave the foam for 15 minutes it will form a skin, you can use a gloved hand to push the foam flat and into voids for a better look.
15. Directly after you have applied the foam, take a handful of sand and rock debris and throw into the foam. It will give a bit of a disguise.
16. Keep back a few cans of the Touch 'N Foam after you have completed your waterfall, you will find you may want to move a few rocks or make alterations to the flow.

My advice is to buy the larger cans and the metal gun nozzle, this can work out cost effective as you can leave the nozzle in the closed position for a few weeks and preserve the remaining foam in the can. Always get a few more cans than you need as you will find that

there are multiple places around the pond where you can secure rocks, make alterations to your waterfall and the like. In particular, I had multiple rocks rimming the edge of the pond that I secured together with the Touch 'N Foam to provide a stronger structure.

Always leave the foam for at least 24 hours before testing out your waterfall. Larger voids will take even longer to dry out thoroughly, even though the outside of the foam appears dry the inside may well be curing.

Take your time and above all enjoy!

Buy On-Line Now @

<http://www.abbuildingproducts.co.uk/black-waterfall-expanding-foam-pr-5204.php>

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