

# COMMUNITY PONDS

## Practices for a healthy pond

### **LIMIT NUTRIENTS ENTERING THE POND**

Too many nutrients (like those from lawn fertilizer or pet waste) can harm your pond. They cause algae and weed overgrowth, which can lead to smelly water, poor appearance, and even fish kills, especially in summer.

### **AQUATIC PLANT AND ALGAE GROWTH**

Aquatic plants and algae are part of a healthy pond. They provide food and shelter for a number of aquatic species and add oxygen to the water. However, under conducive conditions, their growth can take over, limiting the use and aesthetic of the water body. A rule of thumb for a tolerable amount of plant and algae growth in a pond is 25%.

### **EROSION CONTROL**

The constant lapping of waves on a shoreline erode the banks of a pond. Stabilizing the bank is important to keep soil out of the pond and ensure the integrity of the shoreline. Wave erosion is slow, but its progress is constant and can lead to the loss of large sections of a bank over time and during heavy rainfall events. To stabilize a bank, vegetative buffer, riprap, and pond underlayment can be utilized.



### **VEGETATIVE BUFFER**

A vegetative buffer around a pond provides a barrier between a pond and its surroundings. These buffers help to filter nutrients from entering the pond during runoff events. By slowing down the flow of water, they also help decrease soil erosion. Expansive root systems provide stability to a pond's bank. Native grasses and flowers are great for vegetative buffers. Mowing of these strips should be minimal. Ideally, once a year in the spring.

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### **AERATION**

Aeration improves the health of a pond by increasing the depth of oxygenated water. Oxygen promotes good bacteria that compete with algae and weeds for nutrients and is beneficial for fish and other aquatic species. Aeration also helps reduce the risk of harmful algal blooms and fish kills.

### **CONTROLLING AQUATIC PLANT AND ALGAE GROWTH**

For ponds experiencing excessive plant and algae growth, a number of practices can be utilized. Often, multiple strategies are required to control/slow down their growth. Excessive growth can be removed physically and mechanically, but is often very labor-intensive. This option is good because nutrients are removed from the water. Pond dyes help shade the pond, blocking sunlight and slowing weed and algae growth. Aquatic herbicides can be used to control plants. Copper algaecides can be used against algae. Proper identification of aquatic growth is important when utilizing chemicals. Grass carp help control several aquatic plant species.

**Practices for Mitigating  
Aquatic Plants & Algae**  
Pond Dye  
Physical/Mechanical Removal  
Chemicals  
Aeration  
Sediment Removal  
Grass Carp

### **HOMEOWNER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Even if your home isn't next to the pond, your yard affects it. Often, neighborhood runoff ends up in the pond through storm drains. It's important for each homeowner to practice responsible nutrient management for their lawn. To fertilize properly, have your soil tested. Only apply fertilizers with the nutrients needed. In some cases, it may be necessary to apply your fertilizer in split applications to help minimize nutrient loss from your lawn. Avoid blowing grass clippings into the street or directly into the pond.

Along with fertilizing, proper watering practices should be implemented to reduce runoff. Water carries nutrients from the lawn to the pond when runoff occurs. Pet litter should be disposed of in trash bins. Oil and chemical spills need to be properly cleaned. If it's on a driveway or road, rainfall can carry it to the pond.