

What You Need to Know About Algae.



Washtenaw County Division of Public Works

REDUCE ALGAE GROWTH IN YOUR LAKE

The best way to reduce algae growth is to stop excessive nutrients from entering the lake.

Stop nutrient pollution by:

- **Do not dump leaf or grass clippings into your lake or on the shoreline.**
- **Stop or reduce fertilizing your lawn.**
- **Add a buffer strip of native plants to your shoreline.**



If you suspect an algae bloom may be harmful, visit Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's (EGLE) website [Michigan.gov/HABS](https://www.michigan.gov/HABS) for more information on identifying and reporting Harmful Algal Blooms.

WHAT IS ALGAE?

Algae is a plant... kind of.

Like plants, algae turn carbon dioxide into oxygen. But, algae typically lacks the stems, roots, or leaves usually associated with plants.

HOW DOES ALGAE GROW?

Algae need food, water, sun, and carbon dioxide to grow.

Algae get their food from nutrients, like nitrogen and phosphorous, in the water.

An algae bloom can occur when the water temperature is warm, conditions are calm, and the water has a high level of nutrients.

ARE ALGAE BLOOMS HARMFUL?

Not all algae blooms are harmful but some can produce cyanotoxins (cy-a-no-tox-ins) that can make humans and animals sick.

When in doubt, keep yourself and your pets out.

TIPS TO REDUCE ALGAE IN YOUR LAKE

The best way to reduce algae growth is to stop excessive nutrients from entering your lake. Here are three easy ways to stop nutrient pollution from your property.

Install a Buffer Strip

Add a 10-20 foot wide buffer strip of native plants along the shoreline. This will prevent erosion and absorbs excess nutrients. Did we mention it may deter geese from grazing on your lawn!

Buffer strips also provide food and cover for birds, amphibians, insects, and mammals that are vital to the health of your lake system. Learn more about native shorelines at www.shorelinepartnership.org.

Don't Dump Leaves or Grass

Decomposing leaves and grass clipping will add additional nutrients to an already nutrient-rich lake system.

Compost leaves and grass clippings instead! Get started at washtenaw.org/compost.

Reduce Lawn Fertilizer

Proper management of your lawn can greatly reduce your need to add additional nutrients through fertilization. Most of the time your lawn doesn't need fertilizing or can be enhanced with compost.

Test your soil before applying fertilizer. Testing your lawn is EASY! Get a test kit from your local MSU Extension office.

View more lawn care recommendations in our Green Lawn Care Tips at washtenaw.org/3078/Green-Lawn-Care.

LAKE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to visit our Lake Management homepage. This website has more information about current projects and educational resources.

