



Keeping Our Ponds Attractive to Wildlife. Plants Make Ponds Look Natural & Invite Wildlife. Sue Remy, Ponds & Preserves Committee.

Low-Maintenance Zones (LMZs) and Native Plants Are Vital for Wildlife Friends.

Rivendell has learned from experts that having a mowed lawn around the pond not only does not help in controlling erosion but can exacerbate it. Per the University of Florida Extension Services: instead, installing a zone of no pesticides, no fertilization, and no mowing around ponds is best to control erosion damage and appeal to our wildlife friends. This is easily accomplished by installing grasses (LMZs) and native plants around pond shorelines. Vegetation attracts wildlife, including birds, fish, mammals, and invertebrates by providing shelter, food, and nesting sites. This will not only look better, but can also reduce runoff and flooding, and can help to catch sediments to reduce water contamination. A win-win for our community!



What Kind of Plants Are Best for Wildlife?

Native pond plants provide excellent habitat for wildlife and are of utmost importance in creating a healthy



pond. Rivendell has both **Emergent** and **Submerged** aquatic plants in our ponds. Emergent plants are rooted in the pond bottom, but their leaves and stems extend out of the water. These plants provide vertical contrast and cover for birds, aquatic insects and other small creatures. Submerged plants have underwater leaves. Both provide cover and breeding habitat for fish, frogs and other wildlife. They help oxygenate the pond, releasing oxygen from their leaves as a by-product of photosynthesis. Oxygen passes directly into the water, enabling the water to support other life forms.

What About Algae Growth? Can Algae Be Better Controlled?

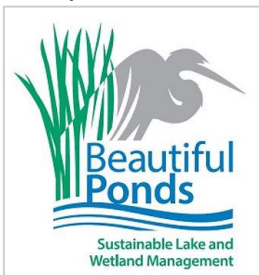
Algae are able to grow when they have enough food. Algae use sunlight and nutrients to grow, so reducing either the amount of light or nutrients is the key. Since the sun comes up every day, we are limited in ways to reduce sunlight. Some algae is good because it provides oxygen to the water; too much is bad. Fertilizer used on your lawn is a major source of the nutrients responsible for algal blooms, so apply fertilizer sparingly. There are dyes that can be safely applied to ponds that reduce how much sunlight penetrates the water to reduce the level of algae. However, this is a band-aid approach. For a long-term solution to reduce algae, the nutrients in the pond need to be addressed. Aquatic plants can absorb nutrients that are dissolved in water thereby competing with algae. Algae is a fact of life for a water gardener and cannot be totally eliminated. But algae can be controlled through creating a **balanced ecosystem** which is Rivendell's core strategy for our pond management.



(Photos by N. Dobias & B. Frank)

Who Helps Rivendell Manage the Health of Our Ponds?

Rivendell has contracted with **Beautiful Ponds** as our new pond management company. They will work closely with Rivendell's Ponds & Preserves Committee to help manage the health and vibrancy of our ponds.



The mission of Beautiful Ponds is to make aquatic environments a little healthier by creating a system to balance aesthetic beauty and environmental health through natural pond management strategies. Every lake and stormwater pond community is a complex ecosystem that requires regular management. Beautiful Ponds uses less invasive and more environmentally-friendly approaches to manage aquatic communities. By implementing aeration techniques, water quality management, erosion control, fish stocking and biological control methods, they provide a safer, more natural alternative. In 2020, Beautiful Ponds won the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast partner of the year. Rivendell is excited about this new relationship and working together for the benefit of our community, our ponds, and our wildlife friends.