



Debunking Algae Myths through Management and Control. Follow County Guidelines to Help Reduce Nutrient Flow.

Sue Remy, Ponds & Preserves Committee.

[Woodlands Word – June 2023]

What is that green stuff floating in our ponds around the shoreline? It is likely algae; a symptom of excessive nutrients in our ponds and lake. With 7,000 species native in Florida, algae is naturally occurring and cannot, nor should not, be eliminated completely as it provides valuable benefits by adding vital oxygen to the water and as food for billions of tiny creatures. However, excess algae can be effectively managed through a strategic combination of proactive prevention and control (vs reactive treatment). You can help too! Let's learn more about algae and how it is being managed in our Rivendell ponds.



What is Algae? Algae are in the plant kingdom, but technically not plants. A diverse group of organisms, algae range in size from microscopic to yards long and from single-celled to complex organisms that rival large plants. These organisms may look like true plants, but unlike plants, algae do not have roots or true stems and leaves.

How Can Algae Be Controlled? To grow, algae need sunlight, water, and nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorous. The most direct way to control algal blooms is to reduce the availability of nutrients and light. Working closely with the P&P Committee, our pond contractor, Beautiful Ponds, uses a variety of nutrient-reduction strategies to keep our ponds healthy, such as:



- **Biological:** The best control is Mother Nature's way; a balanced ecosystem. Many organisms eat algae or compete with algae for nutrients, including fish, beneficial bacteria, snails, freshwater mussels & aquatic plants. While each pond is different, typically algae grow out of control when these other organisms are absent.
- **Chemical:** New-generation algicides (vs old copper-based products) kill algae without building up in the lake and also kill fewer beneficial organisms.

- **Harvesting:** Using equipment or manual labor, algae is physically removed. While it has immediate results, it is more expensive so it is used sparingly when required.
- **Shade:** Algae thrive on sunlight, particularly near shore. Reducing sunlight penetration reduces algae growth. Our aquatic plantings work to block sunlight and also improve habitat for snails & clams that clean the water. Blue pond dye, a vegetable oil product, that blocks ultraviolet sunrays is also helpful as a "sunscreen" for our ponds.

Sarasota County has banned nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer from June 1 – Sept. 30.

What you do in your own yard directly affects the growth of algae in your ponds. Help reduce your fertilizer applications and thus reduce the excess nutrients going into our ponds. **Irrigate only on your allowed day** (see sidebar) and before 10:00a or after 4:00p. Inspect rain sensors & sprinkler heads regularly - check that they are not spraying water onto streets and non-landscaped areas. **Remember: water restrictions apply to Well users too.**

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| Your Address = Watering Day |
| Ends in 0 or 1 = Monday |
| Ends in 2 or 3 = Tuesday |
| Ends in 4 or 5 = Wednesday |
| Ends in 6 or 7 = Thursday |
| Ends in 8 or 9 = Friday |



Your Actions Make a Difference! A key focus of Beautiful Ponds' management efforts is to control algae. Let's all do our part to keep Rivendell ponds healthy and vibrant for the benefit of our community, our ponds, and our wildlife friends.

Click here to visit the Ponds & Preserves website at <https://www.rivendellcommunity.com/ponds>.