

Treat Specific Problems For Better Algae Control

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Grounds management people, experts in how to maintain broad turfgrass areas and sweeping fairways in "putting green" condition, often show less expertise when it comes to treatment of ponds, canals and waterways.

An uninformed but frequent initial response to undesired aquatic plant life is to use the shotgun method of control, which could eliminate the good — some plant life, fish and wildlife habitat — along with the bad.

Modern aquatic weed science is now ruling out this all or nothing approach. Specialists and researchers have found that a rifle-shot approach to the problem protects desirable plant and animal life, yet rids the unwanted vegetation problem. The key to this new approach is specific diagnosis. Currently, environmental protection chemicals registered for aquatic weed use are designed to control specific types of algae and weeds.

One example of a newly registered compound is System M, a Mariner brand algaecide developed by 3M Company. System M has been tested under a variety of conditions throughout the United States. Additionally, the product has been used extensively in control of algae by the Lakes and Waterways Management Service (LAWMS), a division of the company located in Florida.

Algae is generally of three types, filamentous, plankton and branched. No true root system characterizes most algae, although branched algae are erect plants which often seem to be attached to the bottom. Chara is the most common of branched algae, and it often is hard to identify because it looks like an aquatic weed.

Filamentous algae appears as floating or drifting "scum" or mats of hair-like strands; or moss-like tufts clinging to the bottom. It is the most unpleasant of the three types in terms of appearance and effect on use of the waterway.

Plankton algae, sometimes referred to as "bloom," really is minute plant life that is free-floating. It gives the water a green color.

We've found that when applied properly, System M is particularly effective against filamentous and branched algae. It quickly comes in

contact with algae and very little remains in the water, itself. Uniform coverage of the infested area is necessary for control, however. The Federal label provides for a wide margin of safety for fish and other wildlife.

Control of plankton is achieved with System A, a liquid copper formulation. It has been most effective in controlling this free-floating aquatic plant.

Algae is only one of several growth problems that plague property management people. Milfoil, hydrilla and water hyacinth and many others, depending upon climate and geographical location, may be greater problems. The trick is to learn to live with and control aquatic plant life, while maintaining desirable ecological balance. With continued research, the means are at hand. □

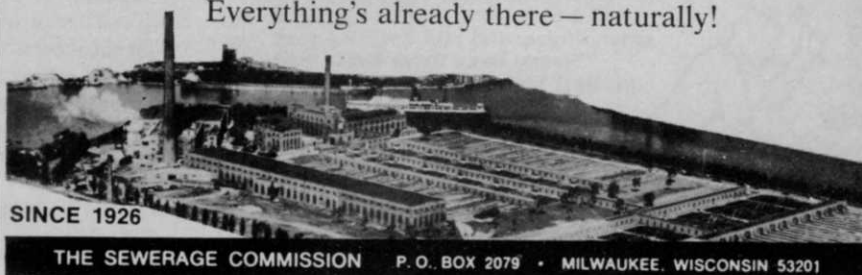


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