

A Little Pond Ecology

Just like all living things, plants in your pond require nutrients to live, whether they are large plants (macrophytes) or miniscule plants (algae). If there are more nutrients, there will be more plants and if there are less nutrients there will be less plants. The amount of plants in any pond ecosystem is often held in check by the level of nutrients. The same is true of the plants in your yard, especially grass. And to provide the extra nutrients for grass, we often use fertilizer. In our situation, this can present a particularly difficult problem.

Our ponds are all stormwater facilities. This means they are designed and built for the purpose of holding water that would otherwise be in your streets, yards, and homes. The water that flows into your pond has already passed through the yards around it and any other yards that drain to it through the system of gutters. As it flows, the water picks up some of the nutrients in the soil and carries them into the pond. Naturally, the nutrients then provide for the growth of either algae, or other plants, depending on conditions.

At Adopt-A-Pond we try to replace the unwanted plants with better ones that will strain out these nutrients as well, but if there are too many nutrients, something *will* grow until it uses them up, or is limited by another factor (such as light). It is nature's way of balancing the pond. Around here this plant is often algae, or duckweed.

You could just leave it there, but if you want to control it, you'll have to look beyond the edge of your pond. Changes in landscaping habits in the yards that flow to your pond, can reduce the amount of nutrients and improve the water quality. Unfortunately getting the neighbors three blocks from the water to help out, can sometimes be difficult.

The resources we've included can help you learn how to keep a beautiful and environmentally safe yard. It really works, so give it a try!