

# 'Algae is like grass when cropped, it grows faster'

## POND CARE

Andy McConnachie from Aqua Landscape Design answers a much asked question about controlling pond algae and warns that every time you pull algae out of your pond, you are encouraging it to grow faster.



*A problem every pond owner has to face but when dealing with algae, prevention is better than cure*

**Q.** We have this horrible green, slimy, stringy algae on our pond. I clean it out every day, and every day it comes back. It seems to choke my plants. We have plenty of plants supposed to help with that. I never fill the pond with tap water but use rain water. Do you have any suggestions that will help with this problem? I am getting desperate!

**A.** Algae occurs for a number of reasons and if you can deal with some of these you have a greater chance of preventing it returning. Algae cells use sunlight and nutrients from water to produce food and grow by cell division which allows them to grow very quickly, especially in the warmer months. In colder months they still grow, but slowly and are difficult to treat due to most treatments being ineffective in water temperatures below 5 degrees centigrade. Algae cells reproduce sexually and produce spores, which allow them to adapt to new environments and to remain in the pond as spores through the winter so that they can grow back when the weather is warmer.

You need to try and eliminate these factors to reduce the likelihood of them occurring in your pond. Firstly; limit the amount of nutrients and sunlight to prevent the algae from growing. You can do this by providing shade for your pond by using lilies or by adding plenty of plants to the water, if you don't want plants in your pond, try adding them to an external filter - a vegetable filter using plants such as watercress is an excellent way of maintaining good water quality - and you can use it in cooking for soup and salads (as long as no chemical treatments have been used in the pond)!

Don't give algae the opportunity to grow - Algae is like

grass; when cropped, it grows faster in order to maximise it's survival. Every time you pull algae out of your pond, you are encouraging it to grow faster. All the microscopic cells that break off as you remove the algae will form brand new algae strands. So prevention is better than cure.

- Keep organic matter down by removing dead leaves from lilies and other aquatic plants, as these contribute to the nutrient levels.
- Don't overfeed your fish as excessive feeding produces excessive fish waste, or even just decaying waste food if the fish don't eat it.
- Prevent algae from reproducing by using good quality products, such as Extract of Barley Straw to keep the growth of algae under control. Start dosing early and dose regularly.
- A good guide for starting to treat algae is if your lawn has grown sufficiently to need mowing, then it is time to start algae prevention.



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