

Spring's Coming ... Look out for the Green

When you own a pond, there aren't too many guarantees. The exception is early spring when you will experience an algae bloom. When this happens, your beautiful, tranquil pond turns green and slimy.

The reason this occurs, is a rise in temperature before the filter bacteria is established. There are a few tricks that will help alleviate the problem.

Cold-Water Bacteria can be added. This is specially formulated to work in cold water. It gets the bacteria in the filter working sooner.

Barley Extract is a wonderful additive that helps prevent the algae cells from reproducing. There are many types of barley additives available. Liquid barley extract is the easiest to use, but there are also pellets and bales, that though a bit messy, are helpful.

Ultra-Violet Light may be used as soon as any danger of freezing is past. UV light kills algae that pass by it. It is used to control green water, floating algae but not string algae. Its effects are not immediately noticeable, but it does drastically limit the algae growth. In a properly set up pond, it will almost eliminate green water. It also will help reduce some of the viruses and bacteria that can negatively affect your fish.

Speaking of fish, this time of year is when they are the most vulnerable. Their immune systems are not working yet, so they are susceptible to many nasty organisms. Flukes, and other parasites that lay dormant through the colder months, now emerge with a vengeance ready to attack any fish that has a health issue.

It is important to watch your fish carefully and be aware of their behavior. If one is hanging by itself, not mingling with the other fish population, you could have a sick fish. Fish as a general rule like to school together, and are pretty social. If a fish starts jumping and flashing at the surface, this could be a sign of parasites.

Do not feed your fish until the water temperature is above 50 degrees. If the temperature is too low, the fish cannot properly digest the food, and it can result in illness. When the temperature comes up, start out with a small amount of Cheerios. This will help clean out the digestive tract and get the systems up and running. THEY LIKE IT TOO!

Many varieties of spring food are also available on the market. They are enriched with vitamins and additives that help give the fish a healthier start. Fish that have had a health issue the previous summer may benefit from spring food. For most fish however, Cheerios are just fine. Trouble-shooting problems like algae and fish health are much easier if you use a pro-active approach and be ready for problems before they arise.