

Weekly Column
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Aquatic Weed Control

How refreshing it is to have a body of water nearby or one you can travel to. A pond or lake can be enjoyed in so many ways. But weeds can take away from the fun and excitement as they spread throughout the water. This is the time to think about a strategy for controlling weeds and then putting those plans into action when water temperatures are in the upper 60's. This is the ideal temperature to treat weed problems in water.

Making sure the water is at the right temperature before treating weeds is very important. When water is too cold, weeds cannot actively grow yet and will therefore not actively take up the herbicide used to treat them. On the other hand, if the water is too warm, aquatic plants have grown very actively at this point and it becomes harder to control. Also, killing the dense vegetation in warmer temperatures can decrease oxygen levels in the water and cause significant fish kills.

When choosing a chemical to use on the weeds in your pond, it is important to know what weeds you are dealing with in the first place. This is because some chemicals only work on certain weeds and will not control others. Once you know exactly what is in your water, you can then make a good choice about what to use to control the weeds.

Safety should also be considered when using herbicides for aquatic weeds. Follow the label carefully and be sure to pay close attention to any waiting periods or restrictions. Most aquatic herbicides break down rapidly so that they are not harmful to people or pets, but there could be restrictions on activities such as fishing, human and livestock drinking, swimming, and irrigation.

For more information on how to control aquatic weeds, you can visit the web at http://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/APM/APM_3_W.pdf. Here, you will find information on aquatic weeds as well as pictures of weeds with descriptions and control methods. You can also contact your Elkhart County Extension office for more information.

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