

RESIDENT ACTIONS TO REDUCE POND POLLUTION

Hinckleys Pond Association thanks the Indian Ponds Association (IPA) for allowing us to publish this information on our website. For more about Indian Ponds Association please visit their website : [Indian Ponds Association](#)

While the IPA conducts proactive water quality monitoring and the Town periodically treats our waters, ultimately it's better to prevent a bloom from happening than remediate one that's already present. Non-point source pollution (NPS) is water pollution from many diffuse sources (such as animal waste and fertilizer carried into streams by storm runoff) rather than point sources. Wastes and chemicals from many small sources can combine to make big pollution problems for our bodies of water.

Disposal of this waste is not "somebody else's" problem. Here are some actions each of us can take to help combat NPS and protect our precious ponds and streams:

1. Soil can absorb and break-down many pollutants, so flowing rainwater should be slowed by vegetation wherever possible. Implement landscaping strategies like xeriscaping* that increases groundwater filtration before water enters the pond or lake.
* Landscaping in a style that requires little or no irrigation.
2. Install rain barrels to reduce polluted runoff.
3. For your lawn, Chris Stokes at Country Garden advises:
 - Use organic fertilizer with slow-release nitrogen that won't leach away if properly applied. Espona has a 4-step program that starts early spring.
 - Aerate your soil once a year to give roots the air and freedom they need to establish deep roots into the soil.
 - Mow (with a mulching blade) no less than 3" high to encourage a deeper root system; 4": is even better. The longer the blade, the longer the root, the stronger the factories to absorb nutrients and water, the better the soil to absorb pollutants.
 - Water deep and infrequently to encourage deep root growth: 1" at a time every 7—10 days for 20 min. watering encourages shallow roots. It may take cycles of 1 hr. or more (To determine how long your system requires, see how long it takes each sprinkler zone to fill a tuna can with water).
 - Use corn gluten as a natural herbicide in spring when the forsythia are blooming and again in late August to September.
 - Improve the organic matter in your soil by leaving your grass clippings on the lawn throughout the season and a thin layer of mulched leaves in the fall. Mow over 1/3 of your leaves with a mulching mower once or twice and spread it on the lawn, so the warmth of spring will turn it into compost.

- Invest \$20—26 and have your soil analyzed at UMass extension to determine the correct calcium/magnesium ratio. A ratio of about 7:1 helps keep the soil from compacting, encouraging deeper roots and discouraging weeds. [Link to UMass soil testing instructions and forms](#)
- 4. Have your septic system pumped every 1—2 years and have it inspected at the same time to ensure it is working properly. This will make it less expensive to maintain in the long run.
- 5. Never dispose of toxic and hazardous chemicals in your septic system or dump them on the ground or down a catch basin. Take gas, antifreeze, motor oil, paint, bleach, poison, paint remover, pesticides, etc. to the next hazardous waste pickup day. Or give unwanted chemicals to friends who can use them. For more information, visit Cape Cod's www.loveyourlocalwater.org
- 6. Avoid chemical additives for septic system maintenance. Research indicates most of these products do not improve a system's performance and are absolutely unnecessary. Some of them are not biodegradable, and a few contain environmentally harmful chemicals.
- 7. Use boiling water instead of drain cleaners.
- 8. Read labels to make sure you're using phosphate-free cleaners and soaps. Substitute baking soda for abrasive scouring powders.
- 9. Don't use in-sink garbage disposals; they deposit food waste into the water system, which can lead to "nutrient loading" into lakes. Land composting is a much better option for kitchen waste.
- 10. Cooking oil, fat, and grease can cause accelerated clogging of the leaching facility and should be discharged with solid domestic wastes.
- 11. Do not feed wild waterfowl. It causes them to concentrate in unnaturally large flocks and interrupts normal migration patterns. Geese, in particular, may stop their southward migration short of their traditional winter grounds.
- 12. Pet waste is a common source of excess nutrients and bacteria. Left on pavements, it will be carried by stormwater into streams. Walk your pets in grassy areas, parks, or undeveloped areas. Pick up and bag your pets' wastes and dispose of them in your garbage.
- 13. When boating, use on-shore rest rooms and pump out facilities.
- 14. Use extreme caution to prevent spills when applying cleaners, paint, and antifouling compounds to your boat and avoid using them where possible. When cleaning or scraping your boat, make sure residue does not fall into the water.