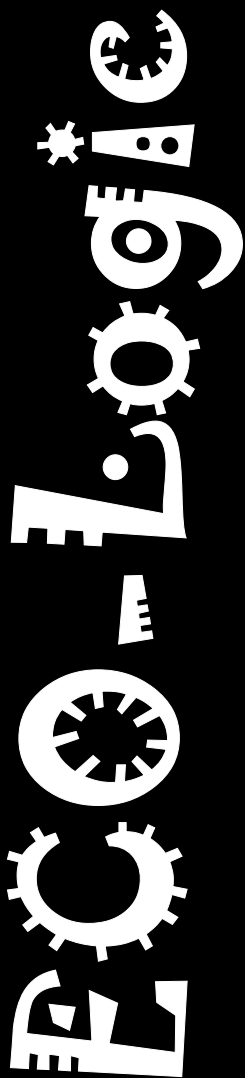




Cooperative Extension
CAYUGA COUNTY



Green Thumbs for Blue Water: Landscaping for Healthy Streams and Lakes

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County is sponsoring a free homeowner workshop series called "*Green Thumbs for Blue Water: Landscaping for Healthy Streams and Lakes.*" These how-to workshops will provide landowners with information and resources to create beautiful, low-cost, and low-maintenance landscapes that will protect water quality.

The workshops feature a unique and innovative tool called a *Fly Over*. The *Fly Over*, a computer program based on the latest aerial photography and GIS data available, allows the user to literally "fly over" portions of Cayuga County, just as a pilot would. The user can control speed, direction, altitude, and more. The program contains information on local water bodies and areas of interest, and incorporates landscaping ideas that homeowners can utilize.

Workshop 1: Creating Beautiful Backyard Buffers

Learn how to create a low cost, low maintenance landscape that looks beautiful, attracts wildlife, and protects water quality.

Thursday, March 20, 2003, 7-9pm or **Wednesday, March 26, 2003, 7-9pm**
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County 248 Grant Ave., Auburn
Southern Cayuga High School
NYS Rt. 34B, Poplar Ridge

Workshop 2: Lawn and Landscape Care for Water Quality

Learn how to incorporate non-toxic and integrated pest management techniques into your lawn and landscape care.

Tuesday, April 1, 2003, 7-9pm or **Thursday, April 3, 2003, 7-9pm**
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County 248 Grant Ave., Auburn
Southern Cayuga High School
NYS Rt. 34B, Poplar Ridge

Call or email to register: 255-1183 or cayuga@cornell.edu

According to the "Water Quality Study of the Finger Lakes", published in 2001 by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the water quality of Owasco and Cayuga Lakes is suffering from massive inputs of sediments and nutrients. A significant amount of these pollutants originate from the actions of homeowners. Vegetation is often removed from stream banks and lakeshores to improve views, but this practice worsens erosion and accelerates the deposition of sediment in waterways. Sediment deposition creates turbidity and excessive weed growth in the lakes, and hinders fish reproduction. The negative effects of erosion and sediment deposition are exacerbated by dislodged sediments that carry pollutants to water bodies. Pollutants like



For more details, visit the
Green Thumbs for Blue Water
website:

www.co.cayuga.ny.us/wqma/greenthumbs

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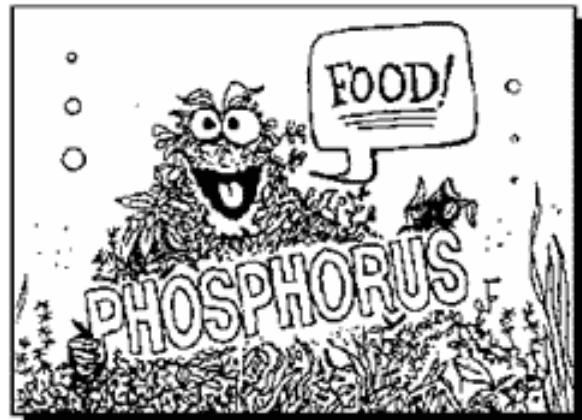
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Phosphorus: When Less is More

Many Cayuga County residents had complaints concerning the quality of local water resources last year. Some comments were in response to a bad taste coming from the tap and an abundance of weeds in area water bodies. The Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency is taking steps to alleviate these problems but it is important for the public to educate themselves and be aware of how their own actions affect water quality.

The unpalatable water and excessive weeds can be linked to an increase of phosphates in the watershed. Phosphorus is essential for plant growth and is an important nutrient in any ecosystem. Problems arise when land use activities create higher than normal concentrations of phosphates. Excessive application of fertilizers, improper disposal of certain cleaners, untreated sewage, and manure are all sources of increased phosphorus levels.

With the addition of surplus nutrients, a natural balance is upset which allows vegetation and algae to grow unhindered. When the excess plant population dies it will sink to the bottom and be decomposed by bacteria, a process which requires oxygen. Abundant plant life that is continually dying and decaying will rob other aquatic life of available oxygen. This can quicken the eutrophication or aging of a water body. Eutrophication is a process in which a lake slowly fills with organic matter and becomes a deoxygenated swamp or bog.



Health concerns can also arise from a water source rich in nutrients like phosphorus. In the summer months blue green algae may become prevalent. Blue green algae (cyanobacteria) produces harmful chemicals that can cause skin irritation and even liver damage.

Although the Water Quality Management Agency is working to coordinate the reduction of phosphorus inputs, area landowners must start thinking about how they may be adding phosphorus into the environment. Never apply or dispose of fertilizers directly into a body of water. Have your soil tested and consider adding organics or using a phosphorus free fertilizer. Sweep fertilizer granules off of sidewalks and away from storm drains. Although phosphorus is locked up in vegetation it is released during decomposition, so keep grass clippings and leaves out of drainage areas, streams, and lakes. Be aware of what chemicals are contained in products you are using. If a product is advertised as biodegradable, it does not necessarily mean it is lake friendly. Some companies have removed phosphorus from their cleaners, Armor All and Castrol being a few examples. Read labels and support companies taking these proactive steps.

As always trees, bushes, and grasses planted as buffer strips along water front property help reduce erosion and pollution runoff. For a healthier lawn and better water quality mow grass no shorter than 2-3 inches. At this height the grass will shade the soil surface preventing weed growth and act as a sufficient pollutant filter while slowing runoff flow. We all need to do our part to protect our areas most prominent natural resources, our lakes and streams. ♦

Alternative Cleaning Recipes

Try these phosphate-free, environmentally friendly cleaners.

Drain Cleaner:

- Preventive: pour 4 qts. Boiling water down drain weekly
- Put 1 cup baking soda and ½ cup warm vinegar in drain; wait 15 min.
- Flush with boiling water
- Use plunger or metal snake

Toilet Bowl Cleaner:

- Toilet brush with baking soda or
- 1/4 cup Borax and 2 vitamin C tablets into water and let stand overnight

Glass Cleaner:

- Mix 3 parts water with 1 part vinegar

Oven Cleaner:

- Baking soda, salt, and water paste or
- Set a dish of ammonia in oven overnight; in morning dilute with water and wash

Tub and Sink Cleaner:

- Rub with lemon
- Make a paste of peroxide and cream of tartar and scrub with a brush

Upholstery Cleaner:

- Mix ½ cup mild detergent with 2 cups boiling water.
- Cool until a jelly forms. Whip with hand beater for stiff foam
- For white rings use mayonnaise
- Apply thin layer of mayonnaise
- Cover with plastic wrap and let sit for an hour
- Remove wrap and scrub with a nylon scrubbing pad

ReLeaf Efforts Begin

Cayuga County communities will soon be greening up, thanks to the efforts of the Central New York ReLeaf Committee. CNY ReLeaf will be sponsoring an information session at CCE of Cayuga County for communities who are interested in improving their appearance.

The workshop, entitled *How to Become a Tree City USA Community*, is an opportunity for local leaders and interested community groups to learn how to become a Tree City USA—a designation developed by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

There are many benefits of becoming a Tree City USA. The designation helps present the kind of image that most citizens want to have for the place they live or conduct business. The Tree City USA signs at community entrances tell visitors that here is a community that cares about its environment. It is also an indication to prospective businesses that the quality of life may be better in that community. In addition, preference is sometimes given to Tree City USA communities over other communities when allocations of grant money are made for trees or forestry programs.

Any community can become a Tree City USA, regardless of size or population. Encourage your local officials to come to the informational session on Thursday, March 6 from 1 pm to 4 pm at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Education Center in Auburn to learn more. Anyone is welcome. Come and share what you learn at your next Town or Village board meeting! Call 255-1183 to register for this free meeting. ♦



Lawn and Landscape Care for Water Quality: IPM for Riparian and Lakeshore Properties

A training seminar for lawn care and landscape professionals

Friday, February 14

9 am to 3:30 pm

CCE of Cayuga County

\$5 per person

NYS DEC re-certification credits available

Speakers from Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell University, and the NYS Integrated Pest Management program will discuss the impacts of lawn and landscape practices on water quality; IPM basics; management of common lawn and landscape pests using IPM and non-toxic alternatives; talking to customers about water quality; and the Neighbor Notification Law.

Call or email to register: 255-1183 or cayuga@cornell.edu

New AmeriCorps Intern

Mike Alongi is CCE's new Environmental Education Assistant. Mike has a Bachelor of Science degree in GeoScience and Environmental Studies from Hobart and William Smith Colleges. He is from the Geneva area.

Mike will be working on many projects, including the expansion of the Watershed Watch program and collaborating with the Department of Planning to implement a mercury collection event.

Look for Mike's Eco Talk column in The Citizen every other Friday.

Welcome Mike! ♦



Mike Alongi

(Continued from page 1) *Green Thumbs for Blue Water...*

pesticides and fertilizers applied to residential areas degrade stream and lake water quality, inhibit fish reproduction, and encourage the growth of nuisance weeds.

Much of the negative impact of erosion and the addition of pesticides and excessive nutrients to lakes can be mitigated by planting buffers and by utilizing an integrated pest management approach to lawn and landscape care. The Green Thumbs for Blue Water program provides homeowners with information and resources that will enable them to maintain beautiful lawns and landscapes in a water-friendly manner.

The dates and locations for the Green Thumbs for Blue Water workshop series are listed on page 1. All workshops are free, but please call or email to register: 315-255-1183 or cayuga@cornell.edu. Each participating household will receive a toolbox with a wide variety of helpful resources including fact sheets and a rain gauge. Participants who attend Workshop 1 and Workshop 2 will receive a special gift. ♦

Mark Your Calendar... *(see inside for more details)*

Friday, February 14

Lawn & Landscape Care for Water Quality: Integrated Pest Management for Riparian and Lakeshore Properties

An all-day training session for lawn care and landscape professionals. DEC re-certification credits available!

Thursday, March 6

How to Become a Tree City USA Community

An informational session for municipal officials and interested community members.

Thursday, March 20 &
Wednesday, March 26

Creating Beautiful Backyard Buffers

Workshop for landowners who want to create low cost, low maintenance rest areas that look beautiful, attract wildlife, and protect water quality. Part 1 of the Green Thumbs for Blue Water workshop series.

Tuesday, April 1 &
Thursday, April 3

Lawn and Landscape Care for Water Quality

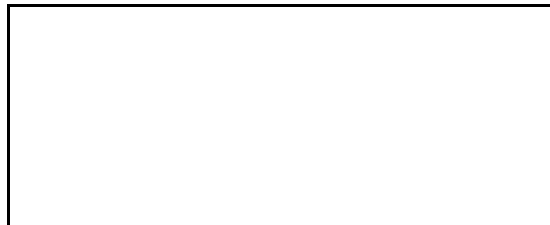
A great opportunity for homeowners to learn how to incorporate non-toxic and integrated pest management techniques into their lawn care and landscaping practices. Part 2 of the Green Thumbs for Blue Water workshop series.



Cooperative Extension
Cayuga County
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Auburn, NY 13021-1495

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CAYUGA COUNTY

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Fax: 315-255-1187
Email: cayuga@cornell.edu

Environmental Education Staff

Kelly Fallone
Extension Resource Educator

Mike Alongi
AmeriCorps Environmental Education Assistant

Check us out on the web!

www.cce.cornell.edu/cayuga/cayuga.html