

Why Does Lake Lily Look Like That?

Walking around Lake Lily earlier this month, you may have wondered about the algae floating in the water. Today, you may be wondering why the lake looks “better.” There are a number of reasons why algae may be present in the lake.

Some things to keep in mind as *background information* are:

* The only water in the lake comes from rainfall and water runoff from everywhere our community. Lake Lily is not spring fed, so it is highly sensitive to water runoff and drought conditions. Earlier in the month, we were well below the average rainfall level, which exacerbated water quality issues. Now that we have had a number of significant rainfalls, the look of the lake has improved.

* All lakes go through a natural aging process called eutrophication, which changes the lake when chemical nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen enter the water. “Cultural” eutrophication occurs when human activity speeds up this aging process by allowing sewage and fertilizers to enter the ecosystem. The excess nutrients can cause algal blooms, poor water quality and foul odors, while also being detrimental to aquatic life.

* In order to mitigate eutrophication of the lake, the Borough arranges for a private company to treat the lake three times per year. This company also monitors the water quality and maintains the bubblers in the lake. The second treatment was applied in mid-June, and water samples revealed that no “harmful” algae was present.

Some helpful practices that residents could embrace are:

* **Forego the use of lawn fertilization.** Lawns that are fertilized contribute to the acceleration of eutrophication in the lake.

* **Pick up after your pet.** Pet waste left behind is ultimately washed into the lake and contributes to poor water quality.

* **Curtail your use of pesticides.** Any chemical applied to plants will eventually impact the quality of the water that makes its way into Lake Lily.

More in-depth information on this topic is available at:

<https://www.jerseyyards.org/threats-to-bays-rivers/fertilizers-in-our-waterways/>

The Cape May Point Environmental Commission

