

Pond Weed Management



At the March 23, 2019 meeting of the Tyler County Forest Landowner Association, Mr. Ken Hall, CEO of Boatcycle, presented options for managing unwanted vegetation in ponds, with a focus on the use of Tilapia.

Silting on the sides of ponds creates shallow water that promotes weed growth. The four categories of pond weeds are algae, floating plants (duckweed and watermeal), submerged plants (coontail, southern naiad, and hydrilla) and emergent plants (water primrose and waterlilies).

To improve the quality of pond water, Mr. Hall encouraged landowners to first contact their county's Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent. Take weed samples kept fresh in pond water for the agent's identification. In a separate container, bring a sample of the pond water for analysis.

Proper alkalinity is important for a pond. Since the pH of the pond will vary as much as 2 points during the day, measurements must be taken several times a day. To correct the alkalinity, purchase products approved for ponds.

Weeds can be controlled by either mechanical, chemical or biological means. Mechanically removing weeds from a pond can be expensive; chemical

treatments can produce short term results; biological solutions focus on introducing plant-eating fish.

Plant-eating sterile grass carp are legal for ponds in Texas, but a permit is required to obtain them. Check with your county AgriLife Extension Agent.

Mozambique tilapia is the only tilapia species legal for ponds in Texas and they do not require a permit. Tilapia not only consume algae and some floating plants (azolla, duckweed and watermeal), they also suppress mosquitoes and are a source of food for bass in the pond. Tilapia cannot survive water temperatures below 55° F. The pond's temperature should be 65° F before tilapia are stocked. The fish will multiply rapidly and eat vegetation during the summer and then, as the water cools, the tilapia will become lethargic and surrender as food for the bass in the pond.

Again, begin your decision process with a discussion with your county AgriLife Extension Agent to determine the appropriate solution for your pond.