

Focus Sheet: Using Chemicals to Control Aquatic Plants, Insects and Noxious Weeds

Managing aquatic plants and algae

If you live in Washington, chances are you've heard of toxic algae blooms, seen a shoreline covered with cattails, or maybe you've had Eurasian watermilfoil tangle your paddle or choke your boat motor. While we are fortunate to have some amazing waterbodies in this state, it can take a lot of work to maintain the health of rivers, streams, and lakes.

This work is often done by local government agencies, lake management groups, and property owners. In some areas aquatic plants and weeds can be controlled by pulling, raking, or installing bottom barriers. However, there are circumstances where careful use of certain chemicals can help control aquatic plants and preserve the beneficial uses of water.

Getting a Permit

When chemicals are used in or near water, permits are often required under state and federal law.

These permits include:

- Aquatic Plant and Algae Management
- Noxious Weed Control
- Aquatic Mosquito Control

Our permits help ensure the chemicals used, and the methods by which they're applied, are the least harmful to animals and other plants. The permits limit which chemicals are allowed to be used, where they can be used, and who may use them. They also require public notification before a water body is treated, and outline specific rules around the reporting and timing of applying chemicals.

Homeowner Use of Chemicals

The chemicals available in hardware stores and home centers are usually not intended for use in water or near water. These chemicals may kill plants or bugs, but can also kill fish, frogs, and other wildlife.

Working with a Professional

Chemicals designed for use in or near water are effective when used properly, and are designed to minimize risk to people and wildlife. Ecology staff can provide a list of licensed professional aquatic pesticide applicators.

Related Information

For more information about Aquatic Pesticide Permits, see the web site linked below.

<https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Permits-certifications/Aquatic-pesticide-permits>



Shawn Ultican

shawn.ultican@ecy.wa.gov

360-870-3492



To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6600 or email at Shawn.Ultican@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341