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What you need to know about using pesticides and other management tools to control aquatic pests, such as algae



It is unclear the exact cause of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs); however, waters high in nitrogen and phosphorus may contribute to a waterbody's poor health. Water quality issues can be addressed by reducing nutrients or by using pesticides to treat blooms. Any substances applied to the water to treat blooms rather than control nutrients are considered pesticides.

[Diet for a Small Lake: The Expanded Guide to New York State Lake and Watershed Management](#) is a publication by DEC and the NY Federation of Lake Associations that can help you understand lake ecology, the diagnosis of many lake problems, and strategies to control nutrients or algae.

There are many programs in New York State focused on improving water quality, including [nutrient laws that restrict the use of phosphorus fertilizers](#), wastewater treatment and storm water permitting programs.

Aquatic pesticides must be applied by licensed applicators. The use of pesticides in NYS waters is carefully monitored and regulated by DEC to protect lake users and the environment from unintended consequences. Learn more about the [aquatic pesticide permit program](#).

A final lap of advice: before hiring someone to apply pesticides to any waterbody be sure to check if the business or applicator is properly registered and certified by searching the [New York State Pesticide Administration Database](#), or call (518) 402-8748.