



FIVE STEPS TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF OUR PONDS

1. Test Your Water

- If you live on a pond or belong to a pond association, you can work with the BPC to develop a testing program to detect harmful bacteria (e.g., cyanobacteria), as well as toxic algal blooms, and to understand pond chemistry.
- BPC will train members of pond associations to conduct testing of the water.
- Your pond will then be tested in the regular BPC cyanobacteria monitoring program.

2. Service Your Septic System and Watch What You Put Down the Drain

- Have your system inspected and cleaned every 2-4 years.
- Consider AI septic systems, eco-toilets, and waterless urine diversion systems to capture human waste and keep it out of the septic and sewer systems.
- Watch what goes down the drain. Don't pour grease down the drain. Never flush anything down the toilet besides human waste and toilet paper.
- Using earth-friendly cleaners will help minimize the disruption to the bacteria in the septic tank.
- Minimize or stop using a garbage disposal to prevent the build-up of solids inside the septic tank.

3. Reduce Fertilizer Use

- Leave grass clippings on your lawn. Grass clippings are an excellent natural fertilizer.
- The Town of Brewster prohibits using fertilizer within 100' of a watershed (pond, lake, marsh, bay, etc.). If you must fertilize your flowers, garden, and shrubs, use organic fertilizer sparingly.
- Don't use any fertilizer that contains phosphorus.
- Don't apply fertilizer between November 15 and April 15 - the months when plants are dormant and cannot absorb nutrients.
- Avoid getting fertilizer on impervious surfaces (driveways) where it might runoff into a storm drain.
- Avoid applying fertilizer before or during a heavy rain.

4. Stop Polluted Runoff

- Redirect your downspouts away from pavement. This small change will limit runoff.
- Fix car leaks so oil, antifreeze, and other toxic substances stay out of our water.
- Wash your car on grass or gravel instead of in your driveway.
- Pick up dog waste in your backyard and in your neighborhood. Dog waste leads to bacterial contamination and nitrogen pollution in our waterways.
- Install a rain barrel on your downspout and use the collected water for your garden.
- When replacing your driveway, consider an alternative to paving, such as gravel or shells.
- If you live next to the water, plant a buffer of trees and shrubs along the edge of your property.

5. Plant and Grow Native Plants

- When landscaping, choose native flowers, trees, and shrubs. They require less maintenance and provide better habitat for wildlife.
- Create a rain garden to capture runoff from your yard.