



Barley Straw for Algae: Quick Facts

By Bob Kalbfliesh

- Barley straw acts as an algistatic (prevents new growth of algae) not an algicidal (kills already existing algae).
- Barley straw is reported to control algae under the following conditions: partial submergence in water (some exposure to light is necessary) and decomposition under aerobic conditions (straw breakdown under aerated conditions is necessary).
- Barley straw method of algae control is a slow process and may take several months to see results.
- Barley straw is not a cure-all method of control, as it doesn't control aquatic plants.
- Barley straw is not harmful to non-target organisms in aquatic ecosystems such as higher plants, invertebrates, amphibians, fish and birds.
- Barley straw is not an EPA approved pesticide. Homeowner application of barley straw does not require a permit.
- Apply 225 lbs. of straw per surface acre of pond.
- Apply barley straw in mid-April, before rapid algae growth in May.
- Barley straw application can last 4 to 6 months.
- Only use dried barley straw. Do not use barley hay or fresh barley. They decompose too fast.
- Place barley straw in netting, such as an onion mesh sack. Do not submerge whole bales.

