

ALGAE INHIBITOR™



What is it ?

Research conducted at the Centre for Aquatic Plant Management in the United Kingdom has demonstrated that a combination of barley straw and lavender stalks can inhibit the growth of algae in ponds – in a completely organic and environmentally safe manner.

The barley straw/lavender stalk combination will control algae in bodies of water ranging from small garden ponds to large reservoirs without harming plants or fish. It does not kill algae already present. Instead it prevents the growth of new algal cells so that the algae problem is controlled. If applied in the manner described below, it will keep ponds clear. Among others, Washington Water Services use our Algae Inhibitors™ to control algae in the Rosario Reservoir on Orcas Island, WA. We also use them to great success in our pond at the Farm.

How does it work ?

When the barley straw/lavender stalk combination lies near the surface of a body of water, it starts to decay. During this process a natural chemical is released that inhibits the growth of algae. This decay is a microbial process and is temperature dependent, being more active in summer than in winter. As a generalization, the process will remain active for six months, after which activity gradually decreases.

When should it be applied ?

Initially in spring before major algae growth begins, and again in the fall before the water gets too cold. In our Pacific Northwest climate, that generally means April and October. Twice yearly renewal is necessary to keep ponds clear.

How much should be applied ?

Two factors are key – the surface area of the pond and the amount of water movement present. Volume is not as important for the simple reason that most of the algae growth occurs in the upper (warmer) few inches of the pond. The greater the degree of water flow or movement – from a pump or natural inflow/outflow – the greater rate of oxygenation and hence microbial decay of the lavender/barley straw and stalks. See sizes and coverage listed below.

For ponds with severe algae problems, it is generally better to provide more treatment initially and then to reduce the quantity gradually.

How should it be applied ?

The Algae Inhibitor™ should be applied as is in its netting. The net package should lie just below the surface in the top six to eight inches of water and should not be allowed to sink lower.

At first the Algae Inhibitor™ will most likely need to be weighted down. After it becomes waterlogged, it will probably require a simple float to keep it in the upper layers of water. Once it has decayed (about six months in the water), the net should be removed and the entire package replaced. To assist in weighting and ultimate removal, the packages should be tied to an object at the edge of the pond.

Where should it be applied ?

It is preferable to distribute packages in several areas of the pond rather than depend upon one large package to do the job. The barley straw/lavender stalk material needs to be well oxygenated in order for its decomposition to be active and the natural chemical it releases to be effective. If there is a pump in the pond, a package should be placed at a point where the water can swirl over it. This will help spread the released chemical throughout the pond.

How soon will the effects be noticed ?

It depends upon the temperature of the water and the degree of algae growth prior to application. Algae inhibition is faster in warm water than in cold, but then so too is algae growth. As a broad statement, moderately affected ponds during the warmer months could take 6-8 weeks for results to be noticeable. Repeat applications at six-month intervals are the norm, but more frequent applications may be necessary to keep the pond clear.

We have packaged our barley straw and lavender stalk Algae Inhibitor™ in sizes suitable for smaller ponds. In general, multiple packages are more effective than a single large package.

Algae Inhibitor™ – extra-small (1/4 pound) effective up to 200 sq ft surface area

Algae Inhibitor™ – small (1/2 pound) effective up to 400 sq ft surface area

Algae Inhibitor™ – large (1 pound) effective up to 800 sq ft surface area

Algae Inhibitor™ – extra-large (2 pounds) effect up to 1600 sq ft surface area

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*Pelindaba Lavender
45 Hawthorne Lane
Friday Harbor, WA 98250
admin@pelindaba.com
www.pelindabalavender.com
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