

Weed-control measures

By Amanda Badger, co-owner of Lenches Lakes, Worcestershire

THE VENUE

Lenches Lakes, Church Lench, Evesham, Worcester WR11 4UH

TYPE OF WATER

2 x 3 acre stillwater spring-fed lakes reaching depths of 1.5m to 4.5m

EACH year from early spring to September effective aquatic weed management is key to being able to offer the lakes to flyfishing or other summertime water activities. The aquatic weeds that are a huge nuisance to me are Spiked Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), algae and blanket weed.

Having drained and dredged one lake last summer I was keen to keep it as weed-free as I could. I obviously wanted some weed but not a total invasion. In previous years I have used aquatic herbicides such as Clarasan, containing terbutryn, and Midstream containing dichlobenil. Both were extremely effective killers of submerged vegetation. But I can assure you it was not as simple as that! Weeding also took place with a weed-cutting 10-foot bar that is rowed out to a casting distance from the stands, pushed in the water, then the tractor winches the bar back to the bank cutting weed as it goes. This is a three-man time-consuming job.

Since the removal from the market of these chemicals I have struggled to manage weed.

This year I gave DyoFix Pond Blue a go, with the marketing blurb selling it as:

- Algae & weed prevention for ponds and lakes
- Blocks sunlight, denying algae's food source
- Harmless to fish, wildlife and insects
- Completely free of pesticides, algacides and other harmful chemicals
- Economical to use
- Easy to apply
- Long lasting
- Used by commercial fishing lakes, golf clubs and local authorities

The gist of DyoFix is that the inert vegetable dye blocks sunlight from vegetation hence not allowing effective photosynthesis. I thought this sounded like a real game-changer so I phoned one or two local syndicate waters who had tried it the previous year. They didn't hesitate to recommend it so I made the call.

It was a reasonable price compared to the traditional chemicals. I decided to introduce the DyoFix Pond Blue (this is the basic product and the most reasonably priced), into the lake in early spring, not letting weed get a grip in my relatively barren lake. Ordering was made simple by efficient and friendly staff who offered their services regarding calculating volume of water to be treated. Initial dose and further maintenance doses were quick to be delivered. I set about flinging the sachets of dye all around the lake to help disperse this 'portaloo' blue dye. Job done - very satisfying.

The blue dye spreading through the water was very dramatic, it quickly dispersed into every nook and cranny of the lake and I was now looking at crystal-clear water with a heavy tint of blue. A month went by and I was keen to keep concentration levels high so I erred on the side of caution and was dosing with slightly more than recommended. I had been assured there was no threat of harm to waterlife if applying more than suggested amounts.

I have continued to dose both lakes, keeping up concentration levels throughout the past five months. It is



This is Spring Lake - the pea soup is clearing fast.

now the end of July, the water is far too warm for rainbow trout to have a good time and the sun continues to increase the water temperature.

The two lakes have taken on quite different characters. Firstly the lake which was not dredged, Spring lake, has remained relatively weed-free! Still one or two areas with low lying weed, but no big deal. So definitely a result on that front. Blanket weed - none, not even in the margins (the blurb states the dye is not effective in water less than 90cm). However this lake has lost clarity, a bit of a pea-souper with fine algae suspended in warm water. The algae in this lake are obviously having a ball.

Whitsun lake, the dredged lake, is a different story being a brilliant Bombay Sapphire blue with stunning crystal-clear clarity. The Spiked Water Milfoil has put up a strong fight and has made a staggering reappearance! Although some flyfishers consider it to be abundant, in my experience it has been a lot worse. Blanket weed has been present in the margins, but not in the quantities of previous summers. No sign of pea-soup inducing algae.

An observation that the two lakes share is that the Argulus population seems to have declined significantly. With various techniques of Argulus management the days are

This is the Lake Shadow, the water is really reflecting a blue summer sky, hopefully you can detect the hint of grey/ black to relatively clear water.



Milfoil-green from the lake bottom and dying from top four-five feet of water.



long gone of trout being smothered with them. However I generally get some Argulus present, maybe three to five on a single trout. This year I have had one or two trout with one or two Argulus. So here at the Lenches Lakes the Argulus have had a bad year. Tim Small of Bushyleaze has also noticed a significant decline in Argulus. He too has used Pond Blue. Is DyoFix responsible? Has anyone else made a similar observation?

I shared my results with the manufactures of DyoFix, Town End. I also wanted to check out a thought that had been voiced by a neighbouring syndicate stillwater, which suggested that the product DyoFix Lake Shadow was a lot more effective than the base product DyoFix Pond Blue.

Having taken advice and with nothing to lose and everything to gain, I gave Spring Lake a massive dose of Pond Blue (5 kilos) to try and get on top of the pea soup algae and with Whitsun lake - I put some Lake Shadow in with the existing Pond Blue. Initially Spring Lake had that blue tinge to the pea soup and Whitsun took on a black (dark grey) effect, whilst the clarity remained impressively sharp. Four days on there are staggeringly exciting developments in both lakes.

Spring Lake has now regained some clarity - see photo, the soup is clearing, the algae dropping like flies! I can see at least five feet and it is only day four.

Whitsun lake is where it's really happening - the now grey/black tinted clear water has started to work its magic. No spikes of Milfoil are peaking from the water's surface, I get the boat out to get my rake in the depths. The results are beyond my wildest dreams. Spiked Water Milfoil is definitely on its way out and the top four to five foot (i.e from the surface down) of its strands are looking pretty sick, brown and dying, whereas the weed on the lake floor still looks green and relatively healthy. I guess it dies from the water surface down.

Hence after four days, I can reliably say that both lakes are responding well to the DyoFix products. My fantasy forecast is that I regain the water clarity in Spring lake and all the

Milfoil in Whitsun lake, that I have battled with from day one at the lakes, becomes history! It looks encouraging. I spoke to Peter J Watson today at Town End (Leeds) Plc, manufacturers of DyoFix Fix products, my number one point of contact. He is aware I am writing this contribution to Newsline, welcomes enquiries and will do his best to make the products work for you.

I have now ordered enough Lake Shadow to give each lake a top-up dose through August and September when the water temperatures should be receding and weed/algae growth minimal. In conclusion: you get to know the product and the concentration levels that suit your waters. I will be sticking with Lake Shadow next year.

Initially, dose of Lake Shadow is double the amount of Pond Blue, 18kgs at book price of £30 per kg (compared to Pond Blue 9kgs @ £40/kg book price) total cost of £540. Spends of over £300 get a 30% reduction = £380. The lakes require approximately 10% top-up each month (dependant on rainfall and light fade), so say 2kgs a month maintenance dose from April to October = 12 kgs (total £360 minus 30% discount £252). Total annual weed control cost £632. If the product continues in the vein of the last few days, I feel a spend of £632 well worth it. It is easy to apply, poses no threat to wildlife (so good to be able to inform interested parties), and it is not a chemical/pesticide/algacide.

Only time will tell how long the weed takes to break down, however, I am confident that it will not hinder my flyfishers experience in September. I will be maintaining the concentration levels and use this year's experience to my advantage next year.

• **Direct inquiries to: Mr Peter J Watson, 0113 2564251, peterwatson@dyes.co.uk**
• **Town End (Leeds) Plc (manufacturers of DyoFix products), Silver Court, Intercity Way, Stanningley, Leeds LS13 4LY.**

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