



ASK JEFF

Lake Ecology
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This is to continue our conversation about what we all can do to help keep our Lake clean. There are two areas of concern that will make a difference in keeping Lake Shawnee one of the cleanest Lakes in the area. We all have to do our part and that is what makes Lake Shawnee a great community.

Fertilizers - Fertilizers have come a long way in the past 10 years. Normally, they contained a great deal of Phosphorus. That material aids in root growth and it will do the same thing in our Lake as it would in your yard and for many years contributed to our weed growth. Now you will see most fertilizers have no Phosphorus (It is the middle number on the package). There still are some fertilizers with phosphorus for new plant growth such as a new lawn. If you are putting in a new lawn, please use that fertilizer sparingly, because it will expedite weed growth in the Lake which is something we certainly want to avoid.

Leaves- I saved the best for last. Leaves in a lake community are probably one of the biggest contributors to Lake eutrophication, which simply means lakes fill in over time and they get shallower and eventually dry up if left unattended. When leaves get into our Lake, they fall to the bottom, bio-degrade, and will eventually become soil. That is why we must be extremely diligent in getting leaves off our lawns and out of our driveways. Otherwise, they wind up in the street and are carried by a heavy rain into the catch basins and into our lake. They also clog up our catch basins preventing them from working properly. In the past several years we have used a weed harvester (a backhoe on water with a bucket that looks like a rake) to eliminate some of this material that has built up over the years. The rake picks up vegetative material along with soil and then is taken to shore where it is put on a truck to be disposed of. We also put some on the islands to help build them up. That organic material is very fertile, so we have planted milkweed on this new soil to help the Monarch butterfly population.

Now, lake front homeowners, you have a tremendous responsibility because the wind will literally take your leaves off your lawn and into the Lake. I see so many people raking and blowing and bagging "nature's food factory for trees" and we thank and applaud you. If you hire a landscaper, make sure he or she knows how to dispose of your leaves properly.

That's it for now. So as always, I hope this has been helpful and informative.

Always remember that the value of your house and property is directly related to the beauty and health of our Lake. If you have questions about the Lake, do not hesitate to ask. If I do not know the answer, I will find somebody who does.

Jeff

Next month, we deal with Water - that amazing natural resource that sustains life on our planet. We will look at things we can do to protect and conserve it.