



On Our Pond

A NEWSLETTER FOR CLEANER WATER & BETTER POND ENVIRONMENTS



Volume 7 No 2 Adopt-A-Pond is sponsored by Hillsborough County, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and YOU! Summer 2001

ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Pond Walks

- Autumn Leaves Dr
- Woodland Oaks Ct
- Geraci Rd
- Big Sur Dr
- Venitia Real Ave

Education Meetings

- Villas at Bloomingdale
- River Close
- Spanish Lakes
- Belle Meade
- Carrollwood Cove
- Foxridge Circle
- Lake St Charles

Cleanups

- Edgewater Village

Plantings

- Villas at Bloomingdale
- Spanish Lakes
- River Close
- Valencia
- Belle Meade
- Carrollwood Cove

THE ANNUAL LAKE, POND & STREAM SEMINAR



We are proud to announce this year's Fall Seminar! **AUGUST 31** at the **FLORIDA AQUARIUM** from **6pm-9pm**. This year we've teamed up with the **Hillsborough County Lake Management (LaMP)** and **StreamWATERWATCH** programs to bring you an even better seminar. So come out and enjoy exhibits from environmental organizations, hear interesting speakers, talk with other pond, lake, and stream groups, tour the Aquarium exhibits, and more! It's all **FREE! HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

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2000 winner, the Cumberland Manors Swamp Rats.

SHOW US WHAT YOU'VE GOT! The Annual Pond Judging is coming soon.

Well it's getting to be that time of year again. As we descend out of the summer growing season our thoughts here at Adopt-A-Pond start sliding toward that annual event we like to call the **Best Maintained Pond Competition!** Yes, that's right. Before you know it we'll be sending those announcements to each pond group representative. And this year we hope to have a record turn-out for the judging. So start preparing for it now! Pull those weeds! Pick-up that trash! Get those habitat boxes out there and show us what you've got! We're looking for the cleanest, prettiest, and most innovative pond in the program!

Entering is easy. Each Group Rep will get the announcement with an application. Simply fill it out and send it back to us with any pictures of your pond. We'll organize the team and head out to visit each pond that applies. The judges score the ponds on a scale of criteria, the scores are tallied, and the pond with the highest score wins! And the prizes aren't too shabby, last year the winning group got an iron and oak park bench and a certificate from the County Commissioners...this year, who knows?

Even if you haven't been in the program that long go ahead and apply anyway. It's a great way to see how you stack up against the other ponds in the program and you'll get lots of great suggestions from the judges. Just remember that this program is supposed to be fun, so don't stress. This is your time to show us what you've got!

Look for those announcements toward the end of September.



Last Year's judging team, from left John Brenneman, Sylvia Durell, Cecil Brockinton, Joann Hoffman, Carlos Fernandes.

WE WANT YOUR PICTURES AND STORIES

The Adopt-A-Pond newsletter wants your interesting stories for future articles. This is your publication and we want to share what's going on with you. Any interesting discoveries? Any techniques working out well? Even just questions. What about wildlife? Seen anything rare, or memorable? Don't forget, each pond is unique with its own problems, tendencies, and inhabitants. What's common to you may be unheard of to others. So enough of me, let's hear your stories.

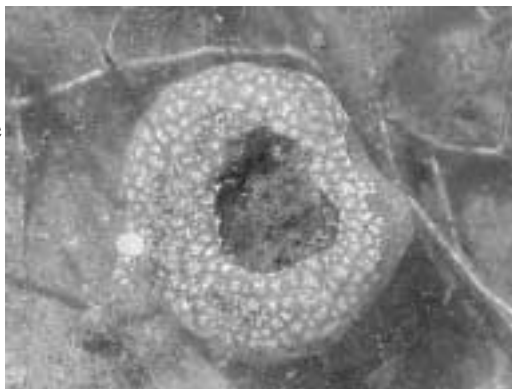


STAYING ON TOP There's no better solution

At this time of year we always get plenty of calls and cries for help. The rains have just seriously begun and after such a dry season, now vegetation is exploding in your ponds. But don't worry. There is a way to handle it. It simply involves staying on top of your pond throughout the rest of the year. We often get slack in our management when nothing appears to be wrong, but we need to make sure we stay on top of our inspections. Learn the cycle in your pond and plan to do more work as the rains start. This way you won't be caught off guard when that first flush of nutrients causes the duckweed to seemingly appear out of nowhere. To help you out in your management we've provided calendars and articles in the Adopt-A-Pond notebook, so don't be afraid to use them. And above all remember that pond management is a slow and intimate process that involves 'getting to know' your pond and working with the seasons. If you got surprised this year, get things in shape and be ready for next spring. We can't rush nature, we just have to stay on top of it. There's really no better solution.

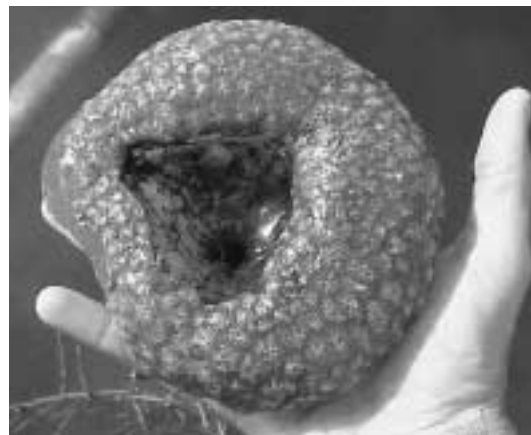
SLIMY GOOEY CREATURES LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN INVADE ONE OF OUR PONDS- How Cool!!

Yes it's true. One of our ponds in the northwest part of the county was invaded by several colonies of creatures like we have never seen. When I got the call I just had to go see... George Deal, the group rep for the Country Crossings pond group was describing pond and wrapped around it with some people in the. It turns out these things are around here, only found in some research and discovered Bryozoans, also called like coral, sponges, or jelly big blobs of jelly to live variety isn't all that comat requirements- high they got into this little pond completely surrounded by houses, we have no idea. Perhaps some birds picked them up on their feet or something and dropped them here.



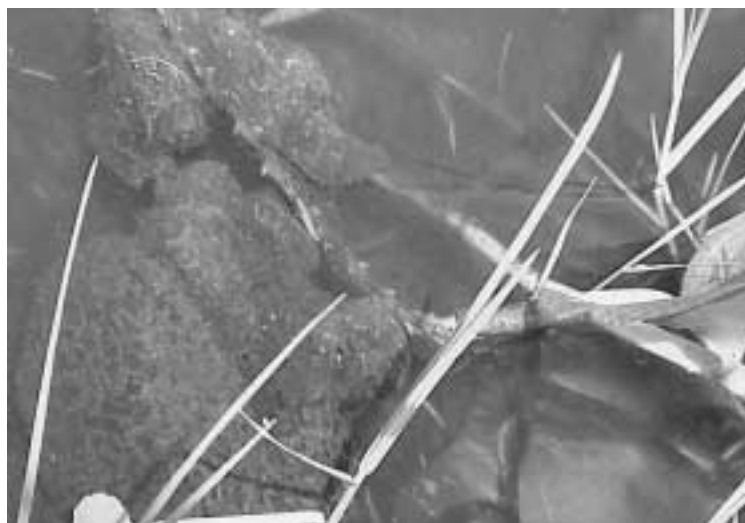
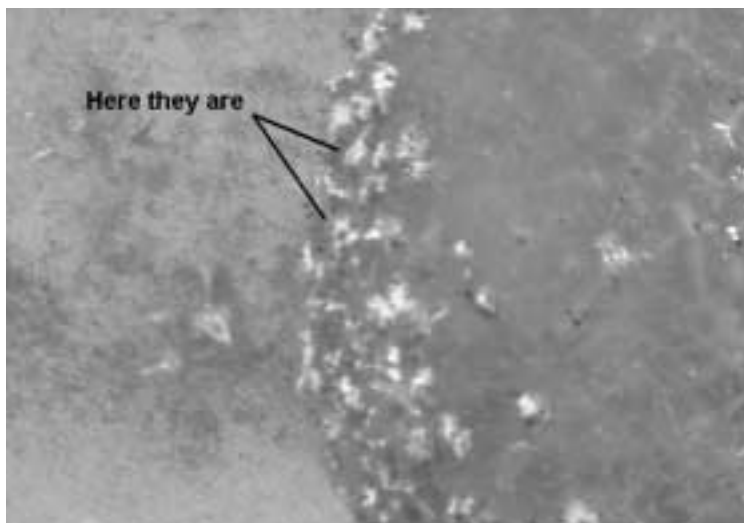
melon-sized globs of jelly floating around in his pipes and sticks. What could that be? I discussed office and we finally got some help from the EPC. probably Bryozoans, they said. They're pretty rare extremely remote and undeveloped ponds. I did ered what they were talking about. These moss-animals, are actually a colony of creatures fish. The difference is that these guys grow these on. They have oceanic cousins, but the freshwater mon. Part of this is due to their very specific habi-nutrients, low contaminants (unspecified). How

When I got out to the pond I wasted no time getting out in the water with my camera. I had seen these types of things on TV, but never in real life, and in one of our ponds! Sure enough they looked just like the pictures I'd seen. The actual creatures are almost invisible black specks on the surface of large, nearly clear, blobs of jelly with the consistency of a well formed gelatin mold. They were wrapped around pvc intake pipes or branches in the water, even just floating along near the bottom in the shallows. I was really impressed. Mr. Deal had taken one colony out before he knew what they were. He showed me the stick they had been attached to. He said that as they dried out the jelly just sort of melted off and lost hold on the stick. We then gathered a sample in a jar to bring back for the EPC to preserve as a specimen.



Since then, Mr. Deal told me the Bryozoans had disappeared from his pond. They probably couldn't handle the conditions in there for very long. We're sad to see them go, but we'll keep our eyes open for any more strange and unusual plants and critters because you just never know what might pop up in our stormwater ponds.

If you'd like to learn more about Bryozoans, check out the **WEBSITES** section on page 6.





THE WHOLE LANDSCAPE

Even green techniques need to be used in context

This article taken from "Why Landscapes Fail" by Michael Holsinger, Sarasota County Cooperative Extension Service

Many of us have heard about xeriscaping, integrated pest management, and micro-irrigation. But I bet many of us haven't given much thought to how all of these things work together to affect our landscapes. Without an understanding of these interactions we can actually damage our landscapes rather than help them.

Consider plant selection, placement, watering, mulching, mowing, and pest control. Mistakes in any of these areas can affect the others. Sometimes these mistakes are caused by a misunderstanding of facts.

For example, it used to be thought that a plant's root system mirrored the top, but now we know that most roots stay within the top 18 inches of soil and extend well beyond the drip line. Other times we just don't think through all of the implications of our actions. For example, broadleaf herbicides affect tree and shrub roots under your grass. Insecticide residues can adversely affect the treated plants or those nearby. And fertilizers for lawns can cause nutrient deficiencies in other types of plants. And don't forget to consider seasonal variation, dry areas may flood in the summer. What about changes in shade density?

Sometimes the problem is in construction. Under-brushing (clearing the understory), compaction, and even excessive addition of topsoil can damage root systems and change balances in microecology. Contractors often bury debris rather than removing it, this can inhibit root growth. And people from other regions often try to use techniques that worked in other areas, with poor results. But this is even true in our own yards, what works on one side may not work on the other.

So when you consider your landscape don't forget to think through all of the implications. Manage your landscape in very small sections, or microenvironments. And don't forget that working with the natural tendencies of your yard will make your landscaping cheaper, easier, and ultimately healthier.

For more suggestions and some troubleshooting check out the article, "Why Landscapes Fail" by Michael Holsinger available on the SWFWMD website (see **Websites**, page 6).

FROZEN TREATS FOR THE STREETS

Another innovative idea for your ponds

According to an article in the August/September 2000 edition of National Wildlife, many state transportation authorities are turning to wildflowers for cover along roadsides. Using native wildflowers not only brings a variety of color to the endless miles of green grass, but it eliminates the need for constant mowing, it provides valuable habitat for animals and butterflies, and it helps combat the spread of invasive species, which often travel rapidly along the disturbed environments of highway corridors. One state really has a great idea. In Idaho, a state committee heads up volunteers that freeze seeds into ice cubes. Then they drive to designated areas along the highways and toss them out! The ice makes seeds easier to throw, and as it melts it provides moisture that aids germination.



Not a bad technique for our ponds and yards. Wildflowers are easy to grow, virtually carefree, and they add a flare of beauty to those hard to plant areas. Why don't we try it out? If you need flowers, I've got plenty of seed. I'll send you a bag. Give me a call at **272-5912** or email at the address on the front cover. Give it a shot and let me know how it turns out.... just watch your aim.

WATER QUALITY- CLARITY

We can't stress enough how important water quality is in our ponds. It truly is what Adopt-A-Pond is all about. To that end we thought it would be a good idea to do a series on the various components of a total water quality assessment. So over the next few issues this section will be devoted to one of the various parameters that you as pond residents and enthusiasts should be concerned with.

One of the simplest parameters to understand is light penetration, or water clarity. This is simply the measurement of the amount of light that penetrates the water to any given depth. This parameter can be measured in several ways. The most accurate is perhaps a light meter, which is lowered into the water to take readings. But these devices are costly and not necessary to gain an understanding of water clarity for our purposes. Another method is the secchi disk. Perhaps you've seen one, these black and white disks are attached to a rope and lowered into the water until the distinction of white and black can't be seen. At that point the rope is measured and the depth is recorded. Finally, there is the turbidity or clarity tube, which we use in Adopt-A-Pond. This device is a clear plastic tube with a secchi type mark at the bottom and measurements down the side. A sample of water is taken and the tester lets small amounts of water out while looking down into the tube. As soon as the pattern is clear at the bottom, the tester reads the measurement of water on the side of the tube. Some tubes measure turbidity in NTU's a standard unit of measurement, others use centimeters of water, which is actually a more direct measurement as it doesn't involve using the scale which is more difficult to interpret. If you are interested in testing your water speak to your group representative. Each Adopt-A-Pond group is eligible for a set of test kits and training. You may be the volunteer the group was waiting on.



JUMPING RIGHT IN

She's a volunteer who's not afraid to get her feet wet



I heard about the Adopt-a-Pond program through the USF Environmental Science & Policy department. To me it seemed like a great way for a beginning environmental scientist working in land development to learn more about stormwater systems. Free training! Plus, my office does a considerable amount of volunteer work for the people in the community, but I was wanting to do something that benefited both the people in the community and their environment. I grew up in Brandon, and the way that it has changed over the past 25 years since I've been here scares me. Not only does it seem we are losing our sense of community, but somewhere along the way it seems we have lost a certain respect for our environment. Let's face it, Brandon needs a facelift. The Adopt-A-Pond program works to bring the community together, one neighborhood at a time.

The program supplements manmade/engineered stormwater systems with

natures cleansing system – wetlands. I like the way the program teaches people about how both systems work and how by being a steward of nature, the quality of their lives can be improved. Best of all, I like meeting the people of my community and working with them to be better stewards.

Lynn M Young is an Environmental Scientist with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. She's been volunteering with Adopt-A-Pond for about 6 months and we're glad to have her. She's reliable, friendly, she knows her stuff, and she's always glad to jump right in and help. We hope you'll have the chance to work with her in the future.

The Adopt-A-Pond Program
 Hillsborough County Public Works Dept.
 Stormwater Management Section
 P.O. Box 1110
 Tampa, FL 33601-1110
Bill to Mail Code 1384

First-Class Mail U.S. Postage Paid Tampa, FL Permit No 2411
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AAP WEBSITE UPDATE

We talked about it awhile ago, and now it is becoming a reality. Work has begun on the AAP website. There's still alot to be done, so I wouldn't expect to see anything just yet, but rest assured we'll get there.. We'll keep you posted on developments as the program continues to "go electronic".

VISIT THESE WEBSITES

Center for Aquatic & Invasive Plants: <http://aquat1.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Cooperative Extension Service: <http://hillsborough.extension.ufl.edu/>

Hillsborough County Lake Atlas: <http://www.lakeatlas.usf.edu>

Southwest Florida Water Management District: <http://www.watermatters.org>

Stormwater Management Website:

<http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/publicworks/engineering/stormwtr.html>

Bryozoan info: <http://www.bio.umass.edu/biology/conn.river/bryozoa.html>

Moss Animals Invade...(more Bryozoans): <http://www.millermicro.com/bryozoa.html>

POND SAMPLING RESULTS

The new Water Quality program is underway. We hope to have more ponds each quarter. The next training session will be August 31 at the seminar. Please call to register if you want to receive kits at that training. One set of kits are available to each pond group. It will also be an excellent opportunity for the experienced groups to come verify your results. Now is the season of algae blooms and nutrient fluctuation. Try to track the cycles in your pond. Have you observed the diel oxygen cycle in action?

NAME	pH	Nitrate mg/L	Ammonia mg/L	Phosphate mg/L	Turbidity	DO mg/L
Horrigan	7			<1	50cm	2
Mirror Lake	6.5	0.1	0.8	0.6	13NTU	7
Spanish Lakes	7			1	10NTU	8
WBA	6.5	0	0.1	0.1	10NTU	5