

# Conservation Highlights



CAYUGA COUNTY SWCD

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2011 Orange County Academy of Fox Hill

## ◀ NYS Envirothon -

The NYS Envirothon took place on May 25th and 26th, 2011 at Hobart & William Smith College in Geneva, NY. The winning team as shown to the left: Academy of Fox Hill from Orange County will be moving on to the Canon Envirothon in Sackville, New Brunswick on August 9th-11th, 2011. Congratulations team and good luck at the Canon!



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## No-Till Drilling - ►

Cool season pasture grass implemented on a horse farm in the Cayuga Lake Watershed.

If anyone is interested in the no-till seeder please contact **Jason Cuddeback** or **John Fraser** at the Cayuga County SWCD office.



## *Zero Phosphorous*

### *Fertilizer is still available at the Cayuga SWCD!*

Established lawns do not require the phosphorous amounts that new seedings do. The 20-0-10 fertilizer blend that is available through the Cayuga SWCD, is designed to reduce phosphorous application on established lawns. Color and hardness are sustained while the potential negative effects that excess phosphorous has on water quality are eliminated. Application rates should always be based on a soil nutrient analysis and followed.

## Special Events:

- MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS—(2ND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 10:00 AM)
- CANON ENVIROTHON— AUGUST 24TH—29TH, 2011 IN SACKVILLE, NEW BRUNSWICK
- EMPIRE FARM DAYS— AUGUST 9TH—11TH, 2011 IN SENECA FALLS.
- STATE FAIR BOOTH— AUGUST 25TH—SEPTEMBER 5TH, 2011 AT THE NEW YORK STATE FAIRGROUNDS IN SYRACUSE.
- CONSERVATION FIELD DAYS— SEPTEMBER 20TH AND 21ST, 2011 AT EMERSON PARK
- HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY—OCT. 22ND, 2011.

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## Blue Green Algae -

### Q & A: Blue-green algae

#### *What is blue-green algae?*

Blue-green algae are a cyanobacteria, which are microscopic organisms that are naturally present in our lakes and streams. Blue-green algae tend to have low populations in waterbodies, but can become abundant in warm and shallow waters.

#### *What does blue-green algae look like?*

Blue-green algae accumulates at the surface of water and prefers slow-moving water. It can range in color from bright green to a more blue color. One of the most striking features is its thick, paint-like appearance.

#### *So I have heard about blue-green algae, but what really is the concern?*

Some species of blue-green algae produce toxins that are harmful to humans and animals if they are exposed to them in high enough concentrations. Exposure from swimming, bathing, or showering can occur when blue-green algae is swallowed, comes in contact with the skin, or when airborne droplets with the toxic particulates are inhaled. If high enough levels of blue-green algal toxins are in the body, it can cause problems with the liver and nervous system. In some cases involving livestock and pets, some deaths have been reported when animals have consumed blue-green algal toxins.

#### *Yeah, yeah, but we don't have that algae around here, do we?*

Blue-green algae outbreaks were noted in several waterbodies in the Finger Lakes Region late last summer and early fall. Owasco Lake was one of the effected waterbodies.

#### *Who should I contact if I see a blue-green algae outbreak or have other questions about blue-green algae?*

The Cayuga County Health Department gives the following tips for blue-green algae:

Homeowners who draw water directly from Owasco Lake, or any surface water, for household use should never drink the untreated surface water, whether or not algae blooms are present. Untreated surface water may contain bacteria, viruses, or parasites that all could cause illness. Consuming water with high levels of algae can cause additional health problems. In-home treatment units do not protect people from blue-green algal toxins.

Do not let your pet drink water experiencing blue-green algae blooms.

People and pets should not swim in surface water that is discolored with blue-green algae. If contact does not occur, wash with soap and water or rinse thoroughly with clean water to remove algae.

Avoid bathing, showering, or washing dishes in untreated surface water that is experiencing an algae bloom.

Boiling water does not remove blue-green algal toxins.

People should suspect that blue-green algae could be present in surface water that is visibly discolored or that has surface scums. Swimming, bathing, or showering with water not visibly affected by a blue-green algae bloom is not expected to cause health effects.



◀ Blue-green algae in the Owasco Outlet.

**Barley Straw for Ponds**— The District sells barley straw in rolls to help inhibit the new growth of algae in ponds. The barley straw does not kill existing algae. Barley straw rolls are available at the District office for \$8.00 per roll. For more information please check out our website at [www.co.cayuga.ny.us/soilcon/](http://www.co.cayuga.ny.us/soilcon/) or call the office.