

AquaticsⁱⁿBrief

FALL 2015



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Ponder These Thoughts

Best Management Practices for a Healthy Pond this Fall

By **Trent Nelson, Aquatic Specialist**

Fall is a wonderful time of the year, regardless of your geographic location; the cooler temperatures, changing of the leaves, football, and the first frost bring people outdoors to enjoy nature's beauty. While fall festivities can keep us all busy, it is important that we do not forget a few key steps to ensure your pond is in top shape heading into the winter.

One of the most obvious changes in the fall is the leaves, and while Mother Nature tends to offer vibrant fall colors, it is important to remember that those changing leaves will soon fall to the ground and be deposited into your pond or stormwater facility. Leaves and other organic landscape matter should not be blown or dumped into your waterbody because this accumulation of organic matter can lead to a high nutrient load, resulting in algae blooms. The leaves decompose and release nutrients, as well as decrease the overall pond depths or holding capacity due to this organic sediment buildup. Completely preventing leaf deposits from entering your pond is nearly impossible and is predominantly dependent on the amount of deciduous trees surrounding your pond; however, care should also be taken to make sure leaf litter doesn't accumulate and clog the outlet structure.

Outlet structures come in all shapes and sizes and help control water levels, including

the emergency release of excessive stormwater during high flow events. Outlet structures should be inspected visually each week or at least during times of heavy leaf drop and after extraordinary rain events. Buildup of leaf and other organic material should be cleared and deposited away from the waterbody. The addition of biological products that increase or boost the beneficial microbial bacteria naturally found in ponds can ultimately aid in leaf litter and other organic bottom sediment reduction. However, these products generally should be applied during warmer months when water temperatures are warm enough to support the proliferation of these bacteria.

Fall is also the ideal time to renovate cool season turf around your home, commercial sites and common areas of subdivisions. Cool season turf, such as tall fescue, established from seed in the fall is ideal, allowing the root system to fully develop before the next summer's hot and dry season, which creates a lot of stress for cool season grasses. Therefore, it is typically recommended that cool season turf be aerated (plugged), seeded, and fertilized in the fall. Making sure that proper fertilizer techniques are used and all bare ground is covered with wheat straw, or other mulch material or erosion control matting, is critical to avoid or reduce the amount of nutrients

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Best Management Practices

Continued from front cover

washing into a pond. In areas where turf is surrounding a waterbody and is commonly fertilized, it is recommended to leave an untreated vegetative buffer of 5-15 feet, depending on the severity of slope leading to the water's edge. The buffer will help reduce excessive amounts of nutrients that are associated with severe and frequent algae blooms and significant water quality degradation from entering the pond. An excessive nutrient load is one of the leading causes of algae blooms in aquatic ecosystems. With proper care, both your turf and waterbody will benefit from proper fall turf renovation, stabilization, and fertilization techniques.

Floating fountains can be a key component to a balanced aquatic ecosystem by providing adequate aeration and are also an aesthetically pleasing addition to your lake or pond. During the fall, leaves continually clog fountains, thus reducing their aeration efficacy to the waterbody. If you have a floating fountain and it appears to have an obstructed or low pattern, it may be clogged with leaf or other organic debris. Unclogging the fountain will ensure that it is functioning properly and therefore optimize the aeration benefit and your investment.

The fall is also a good time to start thinking about winter maintenance for your fountain depending on where you live. Oil and seal changes to the fountain motor every three to five years can significantly extend the life of your unit. In northern locations, where ponds and small lakes completely freeze, it is often times recommended to remove and store the fountain during the harsh winter months.

Fall can also be a good time to begin thinking of any improvements to your pond that can be completed during the winter season. Repairing docks, increasing fish habitat, trimming buffers, clearing woody growth on dams, reinforcing riprap areas, etc., are recommended and should be addressed annually, if possible. The winter months are an excellent time to complete these structural repairs and improvements.

The fall is a prime time to enjoy the outdoors and your waterbody without the summer heat, nagging bugs, and ubiquitous threat of an afternoon thunder storm ruining your evening. The photo opportunities made available by vibrant fall foliage, cool misty mornings, and relaxing family gatherings are unmatched by any other season. Including these best management practices in your ponds and surrounding areas' annual management can create a picturesque, healthy, and balanced ecosystem for you to enjoy. ■

Spreading HOLIDay Cheer



It's that time of the year and the SOLitude team is once again looking for nominations to help multiple families, within the areas we serve, who have fallen on hard times this year. Our HOLIDay Cheer program allows us to utilize our company's core values and bring joy to those deserving children and families who are suffering physically, financially and emotionally this holiday season. Through the support of our team, vendors, customers and friends, we will be selecting families who are in dire need and purchasing multiple items from their children's wish lists to include winter coats, warm clothes and shoes, dolls, sports gear, and new toys and games.

Each family will also receive a Target gift card to allow them to purchase additional holiday presents and needed household items. As part of The SOLution, our community outreach program, SOLitude Lake Management will also be supporting local children's hospitals by donating a variety of games and toys to the brave young children who will be spending their holidays in the oncology unit.

If you would like to submit a nomination for a family you would like us to support this holiday season or if you would like to make a contribution to support our HOLIDay Cheer program, please contact Tracy Fleming, Director of Marketing at info@solitudelake.com. Be sure to include the family's location, the ages and genders of the children under 18, as well as a brief description of why this family is so deserving of much needed HOLIDay Cheer. Nominations will be accepted through November 10 and all details and family names will be kept confidential.

Join the SOLitude staff in being part of The SOLution through our HOLIDay Cheer program and other community outreach and volunteering efforts throughout the year! ■



Visit: www.solitudelakemanagement.com/solution

Effective Mosquito Surveillance and Control to Prevent Nuisance Disease In Your Community

There are over 3,500 species of mosquitoes in the world, many of which carry infectious diseases such as West Nile Virus. Simple steps can be taken to protect your employees, community residents, or your family from mosquito borne disease. Aside from the obvious health benefits, these steps can make for a more enjoyable community, common area, and backyard as well.

Although wide area mosquito control is often considered the responsibility of the city, county, or municipality in which you live, often times these programs are non-existent, or woefully inadequate. It is actually something that many large sites should consider handling internally. Homeowners associations, golf courses, outdoor recreational facilities, industrial sites, commercial properties, and larger private land owners can all use this type of program to effectively and efficiently control nuisance and disease carrying mosquitoes on their properties.

There are multiple components to an effective wide area mosquito control program.

Surveillance

Conducting surveillance is critical to understanding the nature of your mosquito problem. Certain species breed in specific habitat; some carry disease; and some are more susceptible to control methods than others. In short, surveillance can help mosquito control technicians address the problem more effectively. SOLitude can now set a trap at your property, determine what species is most prevalent in your situation, and then recommend action accordingly. We can also test these mosquitoes for the presence of diseases such as West Nile Virus.

Larval Inspections/Treatments

The first step in an effective wide area mosquito control program is to walk your property on a regular schedule to determine where mosquitoes are breeding. Since mosquitoes can breed in a space as small as a bottle cap, it is important that these inspections be regular and frequent. When possible, the goal is to eliminate the potential breeding areas. If mosquito larvae are found, and breeding areas cannot be permanently eliminated, then applications of a biological control method (a naturally occurring soil bacteria) can be made directly to the breeding areas that prevents the larva from hatching into adults.

Adult Mosquito Treatments

Barrier Application: Inevitably, mosquitoes find a way to breed and become adults. As a result, targeting adult mosquitoes through a barrier application is necessary to reduce nuisance and the risk of disease transmission. Using a backpack, ATV-mounted, or truck-mounted sprayer, a technician will target mosquito resting places like shrubs and plants, which provide shade for the mosquito

during the hot days. This barrier spray kills mosquitoes on contact and serves as a repellent for up to three weeks. These insecticides are derived from a naturally occurring compound called pyrethrum found in the chrysanthemum flower. Pyrethroids are used in numerous commercial products that consumers use to control insects such as household pest insecticides, pet shampoos and sprays, and even lice shampoos applied directly to the scalp. So, rest assured that our application is safe for your family.



Ultra Low Volume ULV Spraying: In addition to barrier applications which are residual treatments, it may also be necessary to perform ULV mosquito treatments. ULV spraying is a technique developed specifically for mosquito control that utilizes aerosol sprayers, designed and calibrated to produce droplets that fall within a specific size range, to apply extremely low quantities of pesticide within the control area. Reputable applicators will use only the most advanced hand-held, ATV-mounted, truck-mounted and aerial ULV application equipment. ULV spray covers a wide area

in the treatment zone but it is only active for a short period of time. Since the treatment is only active for a short period of time, these treatments are timed to take place when mosquito populations are at their peak activity levels to maximize the effectiveness.

Education

Ultimately, one of the most effective tools in an effective wide area mosquito control program is the opportunity to educate the property and facility owners and managers on mosquito breeding areas on their sites. Although not all mosquito breeding can be eliminated, taking simple steps like emptying stagnant water from containers can greatly reduce the presence of breeding habitat. Often, deep, permanent water will not breed mosquitoes, but it is important to focus on stagnant puddles with organic matter, tidal marsh habitat, temporary flooding areas, and standing water in containers or structures.

Whether you are managing a residential association or a large industrial facility, mosquitoes can drastically impact a community or commercial enterprise. More importantly, they can pose a significant health risk as well. Why take the chance? SOLitude Lake Management has partnered with Vector Disease Control International (VDCI) to help our clients deal with these issues. VDCI is the choice of counties, large cities, states, and the federal government for their mosquito and vector control needs. VDCI brings this same world class, technologically advanced mosquito control service to commercial businesses, industrial facilities, homeowners' associations, golf course, and private land owners. ■

Call us today to find out how we can help you design a plan to enhance the quality of life for your community or business.



The Benefits of Winter Aeration

By **Jason Luce, Lake Management Scientist, Fisheries & Wildlife Scientist and Certified Lake Manager**

Aerating ponds and lakes as a management tool began as early as the 1950s and was initially used during the winter months to reduce the probability of a fish kill. Later in the 1960s, the idea of aerating your lake to control eutrophication effects and to improve water quality began to take hold. The concept of aeration is a fairly simple one. Aeration introduces compressed air through a diffuser at depth, and causes water to be welled up by a rising plume of air bubbles. Surface aeration is another method that typically uses an impeller, forcing air and water from the surface of your pond or lake upwards, landing on the surface waters, increasing the diffusion of oxygen into your pond or lake (fountain aeration). Aeration has become a widely used and accepted lake management tool to increase dissolved oxygen levels within a waterbody, but as an effective tool it must be utilized correctly during the summer AND winter months.

The diffusion of oxygen into a waterbody through air currents (wind) is one of the main pathways for oxygen to enter your pond or lake, and if your pond freezes, this pathway can be shut down for months.

So why aerate during the winter? Well let's take a closer look at what is really going on in your pond during these colder months and use our findings to understand the cause of a dreaded fish kill.

It begins with the fact that water is a very unique molecule with very distinct characteristics. As winter approaches and the days become shorter, the sun's intensity decreases and less energy is available to heat your lake or pond. As your pond or lake cools, the colder, denser water will sink to the bottom until the entire waterbody reaches 4°C (39°F). At this temperature, water is at its most dense. Further cooling of the surface waters eventually causes the formation of ice and luckily for us, a temperature-density anomaly occurs, and the ice floats.

Now that you have ice on your body of water, we have officially shutdown one of the avenues that allows oxygen to be introduced into your pond or lake. The diffusion of oxygen into a waterbody through air currents (wind) is one of the main pathways for oxygen to enter your pond or lake, and if your pond freezes, this pathway can be shut down for months. Another common oxygen limiting factor that can impact your pond or lake during the winter months is snow. As snow lands on your ice covered waterbody, solar penetration will be cut down to levels not suitable to support photosynthesis. What is a major product of the photosynthesis process by plants and algae? You guessed it, oxygen. You have now witnessed the shutdown of another effective pathway for oxygen introduction into your pond or lake.

Now that oxygen entering your pond has been drastically reduced, the remaining oxygen within your pond becomes very important and essentially becomes a finite necessity. Any ice fisherman will tell you that a lake is not asleep during the winter months. Although metabolic rates are low, these rates are not at zero and organisms will continue to consume oxygen through the process of respiration. Depending on the size of your pond or lake, the nutrient levels within your waterbody and the amount of time in which it is covered with ice, oxygen concentrations can decrease to levels inadequate to support fish and a devastating fish kill can occur.

The benefits of winter aeration are very clear. Aeration allows you to keep the ice open and add oxygen to your lake or pond. This added oxygen is especially important when the natural pathways have been reduced drastically during the winter months. Bottomed diffused aeration and surface fountain aeration are the most common and economical aeration options for your pond or lake. Both types of aeration immediately increase oxygen concentrations, in turn reducing the likelihood of a fish kill and noticeably changing the health of your pond or lake. Consider adding an aeration system to your lake or pond in the fall, and if you already have a floating fountain, consider adding submersed aeration underneath of the fountain for even better results. Aeration may be one of the best management tools for the winter months and I promise you, your fish will love it! ■

New SOL

Q Where did you grow up and how did you get to where you are today?

A I was born and raised in Cary, North Carolina and spent most of my early years fishing, camping and hiking. I've always had a passion for the outdoors which led me to pursuing a degree in fisheries sciences and a career in the environmental industry. I graduated with honors from Virginia Tech and after three years of related field experience, I joined the SOLitude team for increased opportunities to use ecologically-focused strategies to help clients' waterbodies and the environment.

Q What are your overall responsibilities and how do you bring value through your current role at SOLitude?

A I am responsible for lake and pond maintenance throughout North and South Carolina. On a daily basis, I strive to exceed our clients' expectations and help maintain SOLitude's strong reputation throughout the region. Through past experiences with another environmental firm, I bring value to the SOLitude team by offering a different perspective to help accomplish a similar goal.

Q What excites you most about your work and what is your biggest challenge?

A The most exciting aspect of my job is facing new and unexpected challenges on a daily basis that allow me to think critically. Currently, I am managing two very large and unique properties. One property is located in Charleston, SC which has a warm, humid climate and therefore a longer growing season. I also have to avoid alligators on a regular basis while still providing high quality service. Another large property near Wilmington, NC uses all of its onsite freshwater for irrigation. I have to adapt my management strategies to ensure control of aquatic weeds while carefully preserving the turf and ornamentals throughout the community.

Q Where can we find you when you're not working?

A When not working, you will find me spending time with family and friends, hiking, camping, and fishing. I am an avid sports fan and love going to Virginia Tech football games and watching the St. Louis Cardinals.



Ross Dion
Fisheries Scientist

Ol' SOL

Q Where did you grow up and how did you get to where you are today?

A I was born in Coatesville, Pennsylvania and also lived in Oklahoma and Texas as a child. I have lived in Virginia since 1992 and attended Christopher Newport University in Newport News, VA, where I received a bachelor degree in Environmental Science with a concentration in marine biology. I just celebrated my tenth anniversary at SOLitude and enjoy living close to the water and improving the freshwater aquatic ecosystems that flow to the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Q What are your overall responsibilities and how do you bring value through your current role at SOLitude?

A My current role and responsibilities include overseeing all our clients' properties in the peninsula area of Hampton Roads, Virginia which includes the cities of Hampton, Newport News, York County, Williamsburg, Gloucester, Matthews County and James City County. I bring value to the company through my 10 years of lake management and GPS experience as well as my integral role in training new talent to the SOLitude team.

Q What are you the most proud of throughout your career?

A I am most proud of being a part of what our company has become. Being one of the first employees at SOLitude, I have been able to watch the company and staff grow. I've had a large part in training and developing many of the awesome people on our team. I'm privileged to work with a great group of people! A close second is how far we have brought the bathymetry and mapping services we offer our clients. I enjoy opportunities to travel and help train staff with mapping various waterbodies throughout the regions we serve.

Q Where can we find you when you're not working?

A I enjoy spending time outdoors with my wife and two daughters to include plenty of beach time and kayaking. I also enjoy sports such as rugby and golf, although I don't get out there as much as I would like!



Kyle Finerfrock
Environmental Scientist

Congratulations to our Volunteer of the Second Quarter, Greg Blackham!

Greg Blackham, Aquatic Specialist serving clients in Delaware and Maryland, has already logged 63 volunteering hours this year towards SOLitude's goal of 1200 volunteer hours for 2015, including 24 personal volunteering hours and 39 hours contributed by family and friends. In addition to encouraging his wife Alissa, daughters Lilyana and Violette, as well as relatives and friends to embrace the spirit of The SOLution, Greg enthusiastically participated in various organized team volunteering events at the Food Bank of Delaware. Greg and his family have been a staple at weekend environmental cleanup events helping the DuPont Nature Center in Delaware prepare for its spring opening, planting cape American beach grass in Delaware Seashore State Park, assisting with the Augustine Creek Wildlife area cleanup, and paddling the Brandywine Creek to remove trash and debris. Greg is a valued member of the SOLitude team and we appreciate his commitment to helping underprivileged families and improving the parks and shorelines in his community. ■





12 Ways To Improve Your Fishery in 2016

By **Aaron Cushing, Fisheries and Wildlife Biologist and Environmental Scientist**

1. Determining Your Goals

It is important to determine long term objectives for any fishery. Goals will directly influence the methods chosen to improve fish health and growth, as well as the fishing experience. This is the first step in the process of managing a fishery. A few goals to consider are: a balanced fishery, great fishing for kids, a good largemouth bass fishery, or a trophy largemouth bass fishery.

2. Developing a Fisheries Management Plan

A Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) is the basis for any fishery under management. It is a comprehensive approach for managing individual lakes and ponds and the fish populations by using a variety of proven tools and techniques. In this step, your goals, budget and management options are discussed and with the help of a fisheries biologist, a realistic management approach is chosen.

3. Electrofishing

Electrofishing is a fish sampling tool used to gather fish population data that allows pond managers to make accurate decisions and improve management techniques. For owners looking to restore a fishery to a balanced state, an initial study should be part of the fisheries management plan. Electrofishing is typically completed in the spring and fall months.

4. Testing Water Quality

Water quality plays a large role in keeping both the fish and the surrounding ecosystem healthy and prosperous. With a fit environment, you will set the foundation for a healthy fishery. Water quality can be tested year round, but it is best to refer to the schedule outlined in your fisheries management plan.

5. Adding Aeration

Aeration is a great tool used to keep most water quality parameters within an acceptable range. Aeration improves circulation of the water column and improves dissolved oxygen levels. As a result, aerated waterbodies support higher levels of productivity. Aeration can be installed year round and is typically installed as soon as possible.

6. Fertilizing

Maintaining desirable plankton species by taking part in a fertilizing program is a great way to increase the amount of fish a pond can support. Properly fertilized ponds can sustain 3-4 times the biomass of fish than that of unfertilized ponds. Fertilizing is typically completed throughout the spring, summer and fall months.

7. Feeding Fish

Automatic feeders filled with pellet feed are an ideal method to feed many species of fish including both forage fish and predator fish. The additional food source will allow the fishery to support a much greater biomass of fish, while also congregating fish to key locations, which allows kids a great opportunity to both observe and catch fish. Fish feeders can be installed year round.

8. Planting Beneficial Emergent Vegetation

Although vegetation is often considered a nuisance, it can play an important role in achieving balance within a pond's ecosystem. Installation of noninvasive beneficial emergent plant species around the perimeter of the pond provides habitat, refuge, and food for a wide variety of organisms. These plants mesh very well with the long term fisheries management since they only occupy shallow water and they do not require expensive herbicides to control. These plants are typically installed in the early summer months.

9. Improving Fish Cover

Improving fish cover provides needed refuge to small fish and the desired hunting habitat for larger fish. The biggest benefit to cover is that it can improve anglers catch rates. Fish cover can consist of either natural or artificial materials and can be installed any time of the year.

10. Stocking Supplemental Forage Fish

Stocking supplemental forage fish is an important step that keeps a fisheries forage base strong and abundant. The species of fish stocked and the quantity are dependent on the goals and current needs of the fishery. Most fisheries under management are stocked annually with threadfin shad in the spring, or golden shiners in the fall.

11. Stocking Rainbow Trout

Adding trout to a private or community pond in the fall is one of the easiest things owners can do to create diversity for anglers and add excitement to their winter fishing experience. Additionally, they serve as an outstanding food source for pond owners looking to grow big bass.

12. Liming

Adding lime increases the waters alkalinity levels, directly affecting the availability of nutrients to aquatic organisms. Low alkalinity levels reduce productivity in ponds and are also responsible for broad swings in pH which are very stressful to fish. Good alkalinity is key to creating and maintaining a productive fishery. Fall and winter months are the best time of year to add limestone to ponds. ■

Speak with an experienced Fisheries Biologist today to assess your current fishery and help you meet your long term fisheries goals! www.solitudelakemanagement.com/contact

Unlock the SOLitude Knowledge Bank



Whether you are a commercial property manager, residential community manager, member of a homeowners association, golf course superintendent, parks and rec director, or a private land owner, the lakes and ponds on your property are a vital part of the community. They enhance the appearance of your landscape, providing aesthetic beauty and ecological balance, not to mention increasing property values.

That's why it's so important to maintain, protect and preserve your aquatic resources with professional lake, pond and fisheries management services. But how do you stay informed personally or communicate your efforts with the community you serve?

When you partner with SOLitude Lake Management, we provide you with a wealth of lake management knowledge and resources. We also give you what you need to help you disseminate valuable information to your community members, adjacent land owners, or other stakeholders and interested parties on a variety of engaging lake, pond and fisheries management topics. Our expert biologists, ecologists and environmental scientists bring you this pertinent educational content to assist in making important decisions regarding the health of your lake, pond and/or fishery. From water quality restoration and bathymetric studies, to sustainable algae control and more, you don't want to miss out on this knowledge.

Be sure to subscribe to the SOLitude blog (www.solitudelakemanagement.com/blog), and view past issues of *Aquatics In Brief*, various published articles and our FREE downloadable educational guides. ■



Check Us Out...

SOLitude Lake Management will be participating in the following events over the coming months. We encourage you to come see us! If you need information on attending any of these events, please call our office at 888-480-LAKE.

October 1 - 2

South Carolina Chapter of Community Associations Institute (CAI) Annual Conference and Tradeshow
Embassy Suites, Myrtle Beach, SC

October 16

Tennessee Chapter of Community Associations Institute (CAI) Annual Tradeshow
The Omni Hotel, Nashville, TN

October 24

New England Chapter of Community Associations Institute (CAI) Annual Tradeshow
Burlington Marriott Hotel, Burlington, MA

October 27

Chesapeake Chapter of Community Associations Institute (CAI) Annual Symposium and Expo
Martin's West, Baltimore, MD

October 30

Southwest Virginia Chapter of Community Associations Institute (CAI) Legal Forum & Tradeshow
Sheraton Roanoke Hotel and Conference Center, Roanoke, VA

January 12-14, 2016

17th Annual Northeast Aquatic Plant Management Society Annual Meeting
Gideon Putnam Resort & Spa, Saratoga Springs, NY

January 12-14, 2016

50th Annual Tennessee Turfgrass Conference and Tradeshow
Embassy Suites, Murfreesboro, TN

Visit: www.solitudelakemanagement.com/education to unlock the SOLitude Knowledge Bank today!



TOLL FREE: 888.480.LAKE (5253)
www.solitudelakemanagement.com
P.O. Box 969, Virginia Beach, VA 23451
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AquaticsinBrief

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Ponder These Thoughts

SOLitude Lake Management wants you to be prepared for the Autumn season and all of the wonderful cool weather it brings. With this in mind, we recommend you consider the following tips as you enjoy the colorful fall months on your lake or pond:

- Schedule a Bathymetric and Sedimentation Study as well as a structural inspection of your pond. This will allow for proper budgeting for future dredging and repair of any physical problems with your pond and its related structures.
- Fall is a good time to think about repairing and maintaining the areas around your pond. Be sure to trim the buffer zone and make certain that it is free of any woody vegetation. Repair any eroded areas around your pond before they become major issues. Erosion repair can easily be done in the fall months when you can overseed and apply an erosion blanket to allow for soil stabilization until the new seed germinates.
- Falling leaves and other yard debris may blow into your lake or pond. Try to keep leaves, clippings and other debris out

of the waterbody and the ditches and storm drains that lead to it, as this adds nutrients which could lead to the growth of algae and other unwanted vegetation.

- If your pond has a fountain, now is the perfect time to schedule an Oil and Seals service which should be performed every three years. For those who live in the colder climates, you may desire removal and winter storage for your fountain. If so, this should be completed by early December.
- Liming is an important method of correcting many water quality issues, as well as helping to improve fish productivity in ponds. This process, if needed, should be done in the fall or winter.
- Fall is a great time to stock Rainbow trout. Trout serve as a very entertaining fish to catch and will survive in ponds during the fall, winter and spring months. During this time they transform your warm water fishery into a fun and entertaining cold water fishery that everyone can enjoy.

