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So you have had a pond for a while, but lately it seems like every time you go fishing you spend more time unhooking trophy weeds instead of bass, bream, or catfish. This is a problem in a number of ponds this summer, and in years past. Pond managers report weed populations that they have not seen in the past. Ponds that have traditionally been clear are now growing healthy crops of problematic vegetation. What happened, and what can you do about it?

The first thing is what is considered a problem? The generally accepted answer to this question is more than twenty percent weed coverage in a pond is a problem that should be addressed. By starting when the weed coverage is small, a pond manager will have more treatment options available to them, and have a much greater and faster success rate. However, the twenty percent rule is definitely not carved in stone. I consider a weed population to be problematic when it interferes with what the manager wants to do with the pond.

So, the weeds in your pond are a problem, what do you do about it? To effectively treat a weed problem, an accurate identification of the weed is needed. Managers should look at the weeds to see if they are rooted to the bottom or are they floating? What do the leaves look like in terms of shape? Note any flowers, if so what color? Are the stems hollow?

Where is the weed growing; is it underwater only? Above water? On the pond edge or throughout the pond? Are there any unusual characteristics? An example of this would be found in water shield. A common plant often reported as a water lily. This plant is rooted to the bottom, with football shaped leaves that float on the surface. They are green on the top of the leaf and red on the bottom. The giveaway for water shield is a gelatinous slime found under the leaf and along the stem.

These answers can make identification of a weed easier, and a good identification will lead to effective treatments. Chemical applications are very effective if the correct chemical is used. Guessing at chemicals can be costly in terms of money and time, as well as potential risk to fish populations. When a chemical is selected, it is important to read and understand the label completely, then follow the label instructions exactly. Aquatically approved herbicides are the only ones that should ever be used.

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