# ALGAE SAFETY & IDENTIFICATION

## When in doubt, keep out!

CLFLWD WATERSHED DISTRICT

**When temperatures climb, conditions become ripe for Minnesota lakes to produce harmful algae blooms, some of which can be harmful to pets and humans. Use this guide to help identify what you may be seeing in your lake.**

### Blue-green Algae (Cyanobacteria)

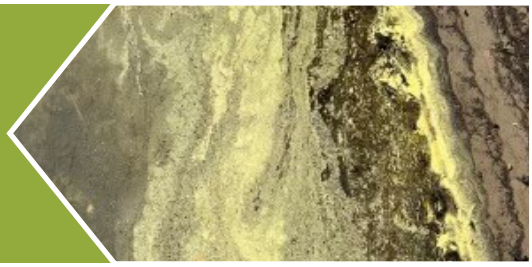
Blue-green algal blooms are often described as looking like pea soup or spilled green paint. However, blooms can sometimes cover small portions of the lake with little visible algae present. Scan the QR code above for some simple tests that can tell you if what you're seeing is likely to be blue-green algae.

### Filamentous Algae

This algae forms greenish mats on the water surface and often has a slimy or cotton-like appearance. It may appear as hair-like growths on logs, rocks, and other vegetation at lake bottom and on the shoreline. Filamentous algae does not pose a health risk to pets or humans.

### Pollen

In the spring, trees release high levels of pollen that can sometimes accumulate on the water's surface. When enough pollen is washed near shore, it can sometimes resemble an algae bloom. While it does not pose a risk of illness like blue-green algae, it can trigger allergy symptoms in those that are particularly sensitive.



**What's being done about it?** The Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District (CLFLWD) has been implementing water quality improvement projects for more than a decade. The majority of these projects target phosphorus reduction. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring nutrient that promotes algae growth when too much is present in our waterbodies. One pound of phosphorus can support up to 500 pounds of algae growth. Common sources of phosphorus include urban runoff, soil erosion, agricultural practices, and decaying plant material. Water quality projects, such as the Sunrise River Highway-61 Wetland Enhancement, can keep hundreds of pounds of phosphorus per year from entering our waterways. Learn more at www.clflwd.org/2022/12/nutrients-and-algae/