

## The County Agent's Corner

with TJ Cummings

I've had several calls lately on aquatic plants in tanks and depending on how you use your tank determines how much plant growth is acceptable. If you are only concerned with livestock water, you probably don't care if the entire surface is covered, but if you are a fisherman you want to catch fish and not moss.

Several have said they don't want green water, but they want good fishing. A green pasture has enough vegetation to feed livestock, green tank water has enough vegetation to feed fish. The green in the water is actually tiny plants, which are feed for tiny animals, which are feed for minnows, which are feed for bigger fish. A tank is an ecosystem in itself, if all the plants are removed it can no longer sustain life.

Another group of plants are algae, or "moss" to most of us. You see it growing around tank edges, floating in mats, or on your fishhook. It feels and looks like bubbly green cotton candy. It was at the waters bottom all winter but as temperatures rise, so does the algae because as the plant grows, oxygen is produced and trapped in the strands causing it to float. The problem with severe algae growth is that during the day it produces oxygen but at night it consumes that oxygen which can lead to fish kills.

Some aquatic plants are actually rooted in the soil. Depending on the water depth they may cover the entire tank, but most will only grow in water 6 feet deep or more. This group includes the pondweeds, cattails, and lilies.

If you want to reduce vegetation in a tank, the first thing is to identify which plant it is, and if you need help with that just give us a call and we can help. There are over 1300 aquatic plants and aquatic herbicides are more specie selective than land-based ones. Another note is to be cautious about trying to kill all of the plants at one time. As plants die and decompose, oxygen can be depleted, resulting in a fish kill so only treat about 1/3 of the bank line at one time with a 1 week wait before doing another 1/3. As always "the label is the law" and especially around water so only use herbicides according to the directions on the label.

Get in touch with me at [tj.cummings@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:tj.cummings@ag.tamu.edu) or call (254) 629-2222 with questions or for more information.

Till next time, ya'll have a good day

TJ