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Battling Algae with a Splash of Color

Beneath the serene surface of Winterthur’s ponds, an unexpected sight catches the eye—vibrant flashes of orange. Except in our two picturesque koi ponds, these colorful flashes are unlikely to be fish. Rather, they are part of a pioneering initiative aimed at taming algae proliferation across the nearly 1,000-acre estate.

Kevin Braun, supervisor of arboriculture and natural lands at Winterthur, and his team put barley hay into orange-colored onion bags and anchored them to cinder blocks. The buoyant bags hover about six inches below the ponds’ surface.

That makes them easy to spot.



Orange bags of barley hay can be seen below the surface of ponds at Winterthur as part of a new attempt to stop algae growth.

“The idea is that as the hay breaks down, a chemical reaction happens that will hopefully stop algae growth,” Braun explained. “The bags need to be exposed to the sun to decompose, which is why they cannot be too deep.”

The Penn State Extension says barley straw doesn’t kill existing algae but appears to inhibit the new growth of algae.

“The exact mechanism is poorly understood, but it seems that barley straw, when exposed to sunlight and in the presence of



We'll check back later in the season!





BLOG POST DETAILS

Posted By:
Jason Brudereck

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