



String Algae Tips

By Jan Schreier

String Algae: the bane of every water gardener. The good news is, the water is crystal clear. The bad news is, that everywhere there is moving water, sheets of stringy green algae cover the surface. String algae tends to grow in sunny locations where there is moving water, and it is extremely unsightly to view. Usually, it is associated with clear water ponds that are in good balance. There are two good ways to get rid of algae in a pond. One is to keep your pond extremely sterile. That is to grow no animals or vegetation in it whatsoever. You can keep your pond sterile by occasionally adding chlorine bleach to the water. About $\frac{1}{4}$ cup per 20-50 gallons of water is enough to kill any algae that may be growing. Add this whenever the algae starts to grow, once every 2-3 weeks usually does it. It is, however, toxic to fish, frogs and most other wildlife that may be visiting your water feature. A more environmentally friendly way of getting rid of the algae (other than pulling it out every week) is to spray it down with hydrogen peroxide. Turn the water off, use the hydrogen peroxide as you get at any drug store for disinfecting cuts straight out of the bottle. The easiest way to do this is to put the H₂O₂ in a plant spray bottle, turn off the water, spray directly on any algae (it should foam a little bit like it does on cuts). Let it stand for about 10-15 minutes, and then turn the water back on. In about a day, the algae will die & slough off, and will be taken care of with your normal pump filter. Small doses of hydrogen peroxide are OK for most plants (except algae), and won't harm fish or birds that stop by to bathe & drink. It works on the same principle as decomposing barley straw, but without the wait, and without that ugly looking bag of decomposing straw.