Should Your Lake Be on a Diet?

"Nutrient-rich" is a good sign in food, but a warning sign in lakes. High levels of the nutrients phosphorus and nitrogen can contribute to excessive algae growth and rob water of its oxygen. EPA finds that at least 45,000 lakes have high levels of phosphorus or nitrogen. These lakes are more likely to have degraded populations of small aquatic creatures, like mayflies and snails, that are essential to the food web of lakes.

What You Can Do

Know plant and soil needs before applying fertilizers, then only use with care. Choose phosphate-free household products. Maintain your septic tank. Learn more at epa.gov/nutrientpollution.

How to Learn More

In the last 10 years, EPA and its partners conducted two large scientific studies of the environmental conditions in and around U.S. lakes. At EPA's website for the National Lakes Assessment, you can view the latest report, explore the data, and more. Visit: epa.gov/national-aquatic-resource-surveys/nla.