

'Tis the Season to Share Those Holiday Trees with the Fishes

~ *Melissa Clark*

Many of you may choose to decorate your home with a real cut evergreen over the holiday season. Once the New Year comes around, you then have to make another choice – what to do with the tree? Some may toss it in the back woods with the rest of the brush pile, some place it at the curb for city pick up, and some may choose to drop it in the lake as fish structure (Figure 1). Before you jump on this option, there are requirements and considerations.

Fish require structure for safety, feeding, and reproduction. This habitat can be naturally present within the lake or can be constructed and installed from manufactured or natural materials, or a combination. Natural sources include aquatic plants, rocks and boulders, and downed timbers from the adjacent riparian area.

Fish Attractors

If your water body lacks fish cover, one can install artificial structures to attract fish and provide habitat for fish and aquatic insects. While one can purchase a variety of fabricated fish attractors (Figure 2), brush piles are the most common type of fish attractor. Constructed stake beds and evergreen trees are also among the commonly used materials (Figure 3). Whatever type of brush you select, it must be adequately anchored. If the lake in need of these habitat enhancements freezes sufficiently during the winter, the



Figure 1. Atwood Lake in northeast Ohio installed 178 fish attractor structures (holiday trees).



Figure 2. A manufactured Porcupine® Fish Attractor.

fish attractors can be constructed on the ice and allowed to sink in the spring. Otherwise, one would need to boat the materials to the site. The surplus of holiday trees makes them an ideal and abundant brush pile option.

Design, size, and placement are important parts of the fish attraction. Larger piles of hardwoods have the greatest resistance to deterioration. Holiday trees are soft wood pines and spruces that can deteriorate more quickly. Therefore, it is best to bundle or concentrate instead of placing them singly or just scattered about.

For location, you must avoid placing the brush in a channel and a beach area. You'll also need to

ensure it is in an area that would not adversely affect public safety and navigation, so the depth should be deep enough for boating activity to pass above without risk of damage to the boat. With the past summer drought fresh in our memories, consider draw down in your placement.

State Laws

State laws may apply, depending on the body of water. Private lakes and ponds are up the owners' discretion or the managing lake association. The Lake Preservation Act (Indiana Code 14-26-2) and Indiana Administrative Code (312 IAC 11-4-7), however, govern public freshwater lakes.

The Lakes Preservation Act regulates any development activity that occurs at or lakeward of a public freshwater lake's legal or average normal shoreline by requiring a permit from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) prior to the beginning of the project. DNR authority under the Lakes Preservation Act is further defined in 312 IAC 11: Public Freshwater Lakes. For these public freshwater lakes, these two laws require that the Indiana DNR issue a license to construct or place a fish attractor in those lakes. In addition to addressing public safety and navigation, placement and design of the fish attractors cannot adversely affect the natural resources or natural scenic beauty.

Approval for placement of a fish attractor in public freshwater lakes comes by applying for a permit. Currently, the permit costs \$100 and does require that the permit holder remove completely or re-anchor the fish attractor if it detaches.

For more information: Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water, www.IN.gov/dnr/water. Toll free: 1-877-928-3755, #1 option for Technical Assistance.

Source

Lynch Jr., W. E. and D. L. Johnson. 2012. Placing Artificial Fish Attractors in Ponds and Reservoirs (A-1-98), Ohio State University Fact Sheet, School of Natural Resources. Accessed 12/3/12: <http://ohioline.osu.edu/a-fact/0001.html>.

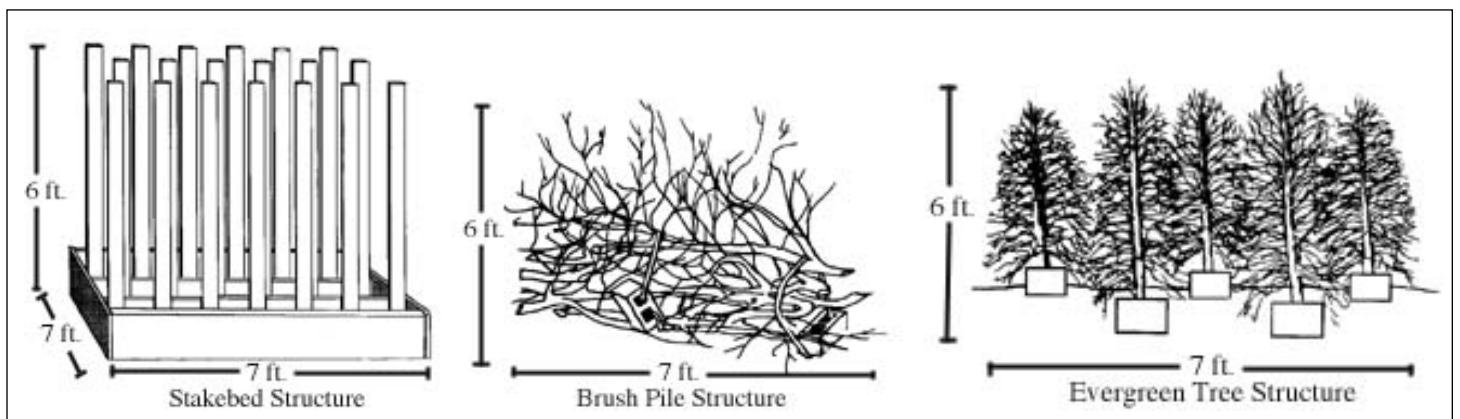


Figure 3. Commonly used attractor material. Source: Lynch and Johnson 2012.

The Volunteer Lake Monitoring Corner

~ Sarah Powers

Last month I was given the opportunity to attend the North American Lake Management Society's annual symposium. This is the second time I have attended. I always enjoy attending conferences, as I sit in the sessions listening to the talks I feel energized. My head begins spinning with ideas for new research and ways we can grow our program. My mind continues to run wild for another week or two after I return then the "everyday" busy work begins to consume me again and I forget. I set aside all the ideas for the work that needs to be completed now and I hope that I will get to at

least one of those ideas in the near future.

This happens to me regularly as I am sure it does to many of you as well. You attend a talk or a workshop about lake stewardship, shoreline protection, or plant identification and you become energized with ideas of what you can do at your lake or in your community. You have great intentions of putting a plan into action. You have ideas of how you can set the program up, what you might do in the early spring on your own property, or what you can bring to your lake association to encourage your membership to do. Then the "everyday" gets in the way. The great ideas and plans you had get put on the shelf for another day.

So, my challenge to you and to myself this winter is to work on

putting at least one of those plans into action. Lay the framework over the winter, solicit those extra volunteers to do plant surveys, encourage people to plant natives around the lake or develop natural shorelines, or encourage other to use phosphorus free fertilizer on their lawns. Whatever that idea is that you have had lingering, now is the time to take it off the shelf, lay the framework and be ready this spring to put that plan into action. As a new year begins we can all take this opportunity to look forward.

Volunteer Lake Monitor Spotlight

Robert Ginger

Our volunteer spotlight this issue is on Robert "Bob" Ginger. Bob has been a volunteer with the Indiana Clean Lakes Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program since 1998. Over the past 15 years Bob has collected 162 Secchi disk measurements on Holiday Lake in Montgomery County and an additional 44 chlorophyll-*a* and total phosphorus samples. Bob is moving away from Holiday Lake so he will be passing on his monitoring efforts for the coming year.

It is easy to see how Bob became a Volunteer Lake Monitor. He began his career as a biology teacher and then went on to become an environmental biologist for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Sometime during this period Bob also began participating in the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program. In his retirement Bob continued his work as a Volunteer Lake Monitor as well as taking on the role as the lake biologist with the Lake Holiday Conservancy District. Here is a list of some of the projects that Bob was able to work on in his time with the Conservancy:

- Re-instituted fish size limits and creel numbers.

- Went to a catch-and-release-only on the Largemouth Bass

- Fish stocking to get numbers back in sort of order, replenish old stocks and gene pools.

- Started a modern spray program for algae control

- Instituted an alum program to keep the phosphate sequestered on the lake bottom

- Planted native aquatic plant species where practical

- Put in bass "nesting boxes" to help improve spawning success, which were very successful the very first year – every gravel filled box had a bass nesting on them.

Bob has particularly enjoyed watching the slow but continued improvements of the resource as they began implementing a proper lake management program. He said that working with the Indiana Clean Lakes Program has been a truly positive experience for him. Thank you, Bob, for all your contributions to the Indiana Clean Lakes Program and we wish you all the best in your future endeavors!

Aquatic Weed Watchers Plant Highlight

This will be the third plant in our “Weed Watchers” plant highlight series. We will be featuring one aquatic plant in each Water Column issue. We will feature both native and invasive plants to improve our plant identification skills

Yellow flag iris or tall yellow iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) – INVASIVE

The yellow flag iris is a common plant that has been used by restoration firms around Indiana for several years. It is now on the list of invasive plants in Indiana that are illegal to sell or trade. The yellow flag iris can out-compete native vegetation and forms tall dense stands along shorelines as it reproduces from rhizomes. The plant provides little habitat and few species use it as a food source.

Identification tips:

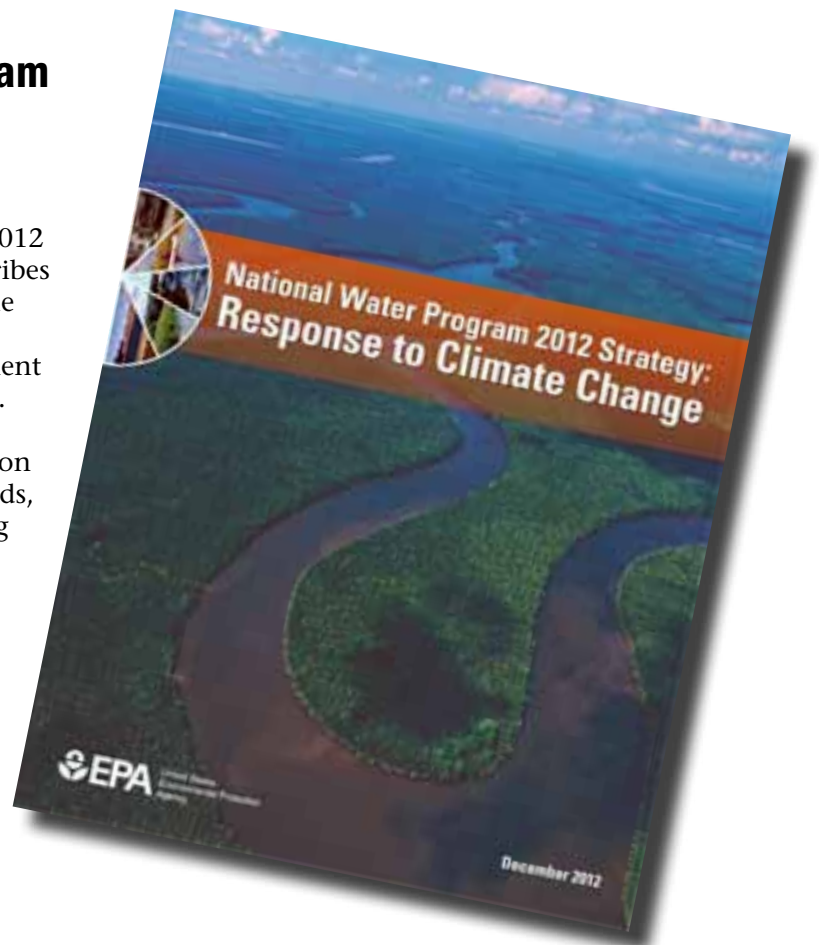
- large yellow flower May-July, can have 2-3 on one stem
- distinguishing ridge in the center of the leaf
- the base of the plant is fan shaped
- only iris that will grow in wetlands



Photos: <http://gardencoachpictures.wordpress.com/2011/04/04/yellow-flag-iris/>

EPA Releases National Water Program 2012 Strategy: “Response to Climate Change”

EPA has released the “National Water Program 2012 Strategy: Response to Climate Change,” which describes how EPA’s water-related programs plan to address the impacts of climate change and provides long-term visions, goals and strategic actions for the management of sustainable water resources for future generations. The strategy, which builds upon EPA’s first climate change and water strategy released in 2008, focuses on five key areas: infrastructure, watersheds and wetlands, coastal and ocean waters, water quality, and working with Tribes. It emphasizes working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders, developing information and tools, incorporating adaptation into core programs, and managing risks of impacts including from extreme weather events. The 2012 strategy also includes goals and strategic actions for EPA in ten geographic climate regions. For more information, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/water/climatechange>.



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Indiana Lakes Management
Conference**

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WATER COLUMN

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Perspectives

“Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour. “

~ John Boswell