



BLOOMIN' BLANKET WEED!



Blanket weed is the common name given to filamentous macroalgae that grow in freshwater bodies. Common species found in the UK include *Cladophora*, *Ulva* and *Spirogyra*.

CAUSES OF BLANKET WEED BLOOMS

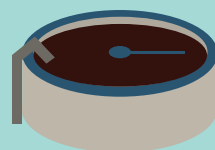
Across the UK, many freshwater ecosystems are experiencing more frequent and widespread blooms of filamentous macroalgae. Research has found that increased nutrient concentrations in UK freshwaters is one of the main causes.

AGRICULTURAL RUN-OFF



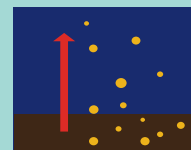
Diffuse nutrient pollution from fertilisers used in farming: dominant in nitrogen.

SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS



Point-source nutrient pollution from treated sewage wastewater: dominant in phosphorus.

INTERNAL LOADING



Release of nutrients from lake sediments into the water column that can be used by macroalgae.

IMPACTS OF BLANKET WEED BLOOMS

The formation of thick macroalgae mats on lake surfaces has the potential to cause major ecological damage.

Oxygen concentrations in the lake water can become depleted when large masses of algae and organic matter in the mats decompose. This can lead to anoxic conditions and the death of other organisms such as fish. Algal mats reduce aquatic plant life due to shading.

Macroalgae blooms can look unsightly when they cover large areas of a lake surface and as the algae decomposes it can produce foul smelling odours. Blooms can also harbour dangerous bacteria.

These blooms can reduce the amenity value of lakes by preventing water-based activities and negatively impacting important conservation work.

Want to know more?

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