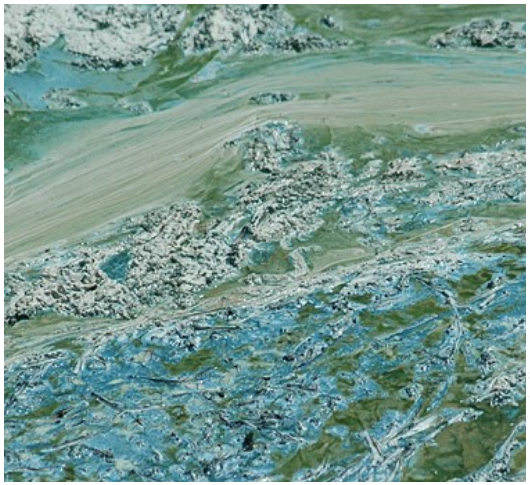
Cyanobacteria

Mary Watzin

Cyanobacteria often start as small clumps.

Cyanobacteria blooms often begin as small, rounded or fuzzy clumps of green in the water (above). As the bloom intensifies, the clumps come together coating the water surface. At this point the blooms may resemble pea soup. In areas with very high densities, or where the cyanobacteria have washed ashore, there may be a paint-like sheen (below) in hues of green, blue or turquoise.



Ron Haskell

Cyanobacteria along the shoreline often have an oily-looking sheen.

REPORT YOUR SIGHTINGS

If you see a suspected cyanobacteria bloom, please report it to the Lake Champlain Committee via our online form or call us at (802) 658-1414. Your information will help further understanding of Lake Champlain water conditions. Remember to avoid direct contact with blooms themselves, as it is not possible to visually determine if they contain toxins.

BECOME A MONITOR

Contact LCC at the address below to become a summer cyanobacteria monitor or attend a training session to learn more about cyanobacteria.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

During the summer months cyanobacteria monitoring reports from LCC and the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation are compiled on a **cyanobacteria tracker map** hosted on the Vermont Department of Health's website. You'll find further information about cyanobacteria there and on the Lake Champlain Committee's website.

The **Lake Champlain Committee** is a membership-supported, bi-state nonprofit organization working since 1963 to protect Lake Champlain's health and accessibility through science-based advocacy, education and collaborative action. We welcome your involvement!

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Printed on non-chlorine bleach recycled paper in the interest of clean water!

Recognizing Cyanobacteria In Lake Champlain

Mary Watzin

Cyanobacteria washed up along shoreline.

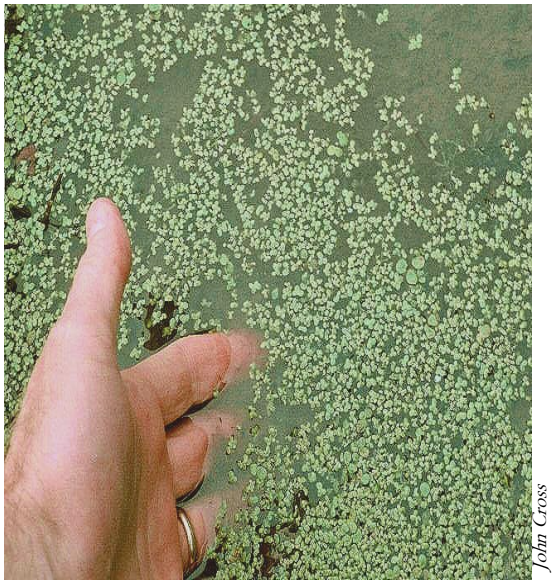
Cyanobacteria blooms pose a health concern because of their potential to produce toxins. Not all blooms are cyanobacteria and not all cyanobacteria blooms are toxic.

This flyer is a visual guide to help people distinguish cyanobacteria from various types of floating phenomena that are often mistaken for it. The key should not be relied upon to determine whether or not a cyanobacteria bloom contains toxins, that can only be determined through lab analysis of a water sample.

Since 2003, the **Lake Champlain Committee** (LCC) has trained citizen volunteers to monitor for cyanobacteria at lakeshore locations. Monitors file weekly online reports that are relayed to local and state agencies and published on the VT Dept. of Health website and accessible to anyone with internet access. The program helps health, environmental and recreational officials assess the safety of our beaches. It also provides important data to help reduce the frequency of blooms.

Floating Phenomena That Aren't Cyanobacteria Blooms

Duckweed



John Cross

Duckweed, a plant unrelated to cyanobacteria, looks similar when it proliferates and washes ashore, but you should be able to note that each speck is an individual flattened floating leaf, while cyanobacteria have no leaves. There are a number of different species of duckweed, all in the family *Lemnaceae*. Duckweed is most common in sheltered bays and inlets.

Green Algae

Great Lakes WATER Institute

Lake Champlain also experiences blooms of non-toxic green algae such as *Cladophora*. This species grows attached to rocks and breaks off in clumps that may appear brown or green and stringy. *Cladophora* do not form paint-like oily slicks. Other examples of algae that are not cyanobacteria may look like long green hairs, green clumps, yellowish clouds, or gelatinous brown balls.

Pollen

Mike Winslow

Accumulations of pollen from pine and other trees may also appear like cyanobacteria. Pollen forms a film on the water, but unlike green algae and cyanobacteria, it is yellowish and will feel coarse to the touch rather than slimy. When pollen is abundant it will coat items on land as well as in the water. Pollen most often accumulates in spring and early summer.