

GEESE MANAGEMENT FACT SHEET

In the last 10 years the population of Canada geese permanently residing in and around suburban ponds has skyrocketed. Large amounts of feces may end up in the water, either directly from geese on the water or rainwater runoff from lawns where feces have accumulated. The plant nutrients in the feces can contribute to excessive algae growth. This may inhibit recreational activities such as boating or swimming, as well as create poor habitat for fish and wildlife, and possibly bad odors when the algae decays. Canada geese are protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Under this Act, it is illegal to kill or capture geese outside a legal hunting season or to harass their nests without a permit. Some possible management techniques are listed below:

SHORELINE MODIFICATION: Low vegetation near the water allows geese to feed and provides a wide view with which to see potential predators. In general, geese do not favor habitats with tall vegetation. Create a buffer strip (approximately 10-20 feet wide) between the shoreline and any mowed lawn. Plant natural shoreline vegetation (i.e., bulrushes, cattails, rushes, grasses, shrubs, and trees, etc.) or allow the vegetation to establish naturally.

LET THERE BE ICE: Aeration systems prevent the pond from freezing, not forcing geese to migrate elsewhere. Aerators should be turned off during fall and early winter. Once the pond freezes over and the geese have left, wait a few weeks before turning the aerators on again if needed.

PHYSICAL EXCLUSION: Along with a traditional wood or wire fence, an effective exclusion control is to suspend netting over the area where geese are unwanted. A similar deterrent often used is a single string or wire suspended a foot above the ground along the length of the shoreline.

REPELLENT AND HARASSMENT TECHNIQUES: With these types of techniques, implementation early in the season is necessary, before geese establish territories and begin nesting. The goal with harassment techniques is to frighten geese from an area. Plastic owls, alligators and hawks simulate natural predators while balloons, shiny tape, flags and loud noises make geese nervous. Over time these techniques may be ineffective.

- Dogs can be used primarily in the spring and fall to keep birds from using an area by herding or chasing geese.
- **Dogs should not be used during the summer when geese are unable to fly due to molting.** Non-native mute swans are used because they are naturally aggressive in defending their territory, including chasing other waterfowl away from their nesting area.
- ReJeX-iT® and GooseChase™ are made from methyl-anthranilate, a compound that tastes bad and can be sprayed on areas where geese are feeding. Another product, Flight Control™, also absorbs ultra violet light making the grass appear as if it is not a food source. The sprays should be reapplied every 14-30 days.

DO NOT FEED THE GEESE: Birds become dependent on handouts, become semi-domesticated, and do not migrate. Geese can actually be harmed by filling-up on human food. Geese that are accustomed to hand feeding may become aggressive.

NEST DESTRUCTION: Eggs are made non-productive by shaking them vigorously as soon as possible after a full clutch is laid and incubation begins. Eggs should be returned to the nest so the hen goose does not re-lay another clutch. **Please be aware that egg addling requires a state and federal permit.**