



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Aquaculture & Laboratory Services



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Is that pollen or algae?

During the spring and fall, plants produce large quantities of pollen. You may notice pollen covering surfaces in your everyday life, like your car, and causing you to have seasonal allergies.



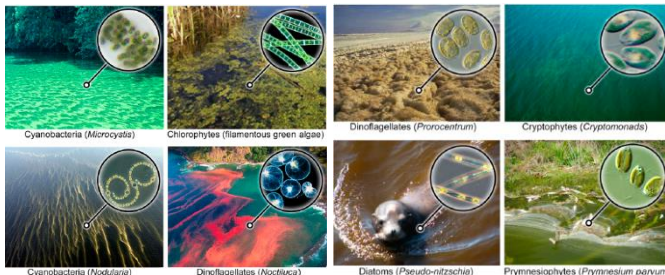
Pollen dispersing from a pine tree (left); pollen covering a car (middle); image of a pollen grain taken with a light microscope (right).

When wind disperses the pollen, it can accumulate on lakes, rivers, and coastal waterways. Pollen may appear to be yellow speckles, streaks, or scum on water surfaces.



Pollen accumulating on water surfaces.

The Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Aquaculture manages Connecticut’s shellfish sanitation program. Part of the program involves monitoring for harmful algal blooms (HABs). HABs are microscopic organisms that live in the water column and produce toxins that can accumulate in shellfish tissues. HABs are detrimental to human health, the environment and/or the economy in every U.S. state. Freshwater HABs (cyanobacteria, or “blue-green algae”) tend to form green blooms, while marine HABs (commonly referred to a “red tides”) tend to form brown-red blooms.



Different types of harmful algal blooms showing the bloom and the microscopic organism responsible

(Paerl et al. 2018. Mitigating the expansion of Harmful Algal Blooms Across the Freshwater-to-Marine Continuum. Environ. Sci. Technol. 52: 5519-5529).