



Chara ... Improving Our Pond Water!

Chara is a genus of green algae commonly known as muskgrass or stonewort. Chara typically grows in fresh-water bodies and can attach to muddy bottoms.

Chara is covered with calcium carbonate deposits, giving it a rough, gritty texture and even a musky or garlic-like odor. It can range in size from under an inch to about 6.5 feet. It plays an important ecological role by providing habitat and food for aquatic animals, stabilizing sediments, and supporting small water creatures used as food by larger wildlife.

Chara can become a nuisance by carpeting the bottom of ponds and lakes, crowding out other species. Methods to manage Chara growth include mechanical removal, biological controls, or chemical treatments.

Benefits of Chara in Pond Ecosystems

- Chara provides habitat and shelter for small aquatic animals and invertebrates, supporting biodiversity.
- It stabilizes sediment at the bottom of ponds, helping to reduce erosion and water turbidity.
- Chara competes with and can help control the growth of nuisance algae by absorbing nutrients, thereby improving water quality.
- It produces oxygen through photosynthesis, which benefits aquatic life.

Potential Harm of Chara

- When it grows excessively or forms thick mats, it can crowd out other aquatic plants.



On balance, Chara is more beneficial than harmful to pond ecosystems. Its ecological roles enhance pond health, but excessive expansion can require control measures to maintain a balanced environment.

CCTH Chara Maintenance

According to Brittany Chesser, TAMU AgriLife Aquatic Specialist, chara should occupy only 30 percent of our pond. CCTH removes pond perimeter chara on a regular basis to achieve this objective.



Life in the Pond

Our pond is teeming with aquatic life: many varieties of fish, turtles, frogs, ducks, swans, other shore birds and aquatic plants. Among the most beautiful species are the koi fish. Jim Whitworth (Unit 36) and Jack Dugan (Unit 23) graciously stocked the pond with koi a year ago. Jim estimates there are now about 30 adult koi, along with many catfish, goldfish and mosquito fish. Jim has recently added 120 koi fingerlings.

The best time to get a good look at the beautiful koi is at 7:00 am each morning when Jim feeds them off the bridge near unit 125. Join Jim at the bridge some early morning and enjoy the show!

NOT JUST A DROP IN THE BUCKET

A constant supply of water is necessary to sustain our one-acre pond and the aquatic life that depends on it. Under Stage 3 Drought Restrictions, it is prohibited to use city water to top off the pond. Since December of 2024, our pond has been sustained solely by rain and water from our well. Bob Buchanan has determined the amount of well water needed to sustain our pond through the hot and dry summer months. Absent significant periodic rain, a minimum of 75-80,000 gallons of well water is needed per month. City regulators recently approved a new well permit allowing us to pump up to 1 million gallons of well water annually to top off the pond. The permit must be renewed in September 2026.