

# Garden tips to help avoid bloomin' algae

## on the bay

Jan Lewis



nutrient-rich substances that are flushed down the drains and into the bay when heavy rain falls.

Lyngbya grows in a warm, nutrient-rich environment, thriving where levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in the water are high.

It has many negative consequences.

Fishers report fish avoid places where lyngbya is growing – shellfish collectors have found touching lyngbya can cause nasty rashes, nausea and even breathing difficulties.

Scientists, in turn, are concerned the smothering of seagrass beds will have an impact on the food available for dugongs and green turtles, and beach-walkers and tourists are repelled by the piles of smelly algae left on the

beaches when the algae dies.

It's not too difficult to reduce the level of nutrients carried down the drains.

Here are some of the tips suggested on the magnet:

- Keep the stormwater drains free of plant litter and garbage.
- Wisely fertilise. Use a small amount of fertiliser and water it in. There's no need to fertilise native plants.
- Wash your car and boat over your lawn or garden. Use a garden-friendly soap.
- Collect dead leaves off your driveway so they don't wash into the stormwater drains.
- Check your sprinkler system. Don't let it wash fertiliser onto the road. Don't use fertiliser when it's going to rain.
- Carefully dispose of chemicals, oil, petrol and paint.
- Pump your septic tank when it starts to smell.

■ *Jan Lewis is a project officer with the Roebuck Bay Working Group.*

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