



Are You Using a Phosphate Based Dishwasher Detergent? Switch to a “0” Phosphate Detergent And Help *Save The Lake*

Algal growth in Lake Waramaug is almost directly proportional to the availability of phosphorus in the lake water. High levels of phosphorus levels also support native and invasive weed growth in the lake.

Lawn fertilizers, erosion sites, run off from roads and paved surfaces, leaking septic systems, leaves that wash into the lake and decay, geese and other animal droppings are all source of phosphorus. With the cooperation of everyone living in the watershed we continue to make progress in controlling and reducing these phosphorous sources.

We are adding another source to this no-no list – phosphate based dishwashing detergents!

State laws in Connecticut and across the country have for many years banned or strictly limited the percentage of phosphate in laundry detergents – but not dishwashing detergents.

In 1975 when the Task Force was formed, phosphorus from these detergents were reaching the ground water and in areas near lakes flowing into the lake water feeding more and more algae and weed growth. One of our first educational campaigns was to get watershed land owners to stop using phosphate laundry detergents. Flyers were sent to all lake area landowners encouraging the use of an “Arm and Hammer” detergent which at the time was one of the few generally available non phosphate laundry detergents. We had great cooperation.

Now we believe that dishwashing detergents are adding to phosphorous levels in Lake Waramaug. The limits on phosphates in *dishwashing detergent* were not included in the laundry detergent legislation and automatic dishwashers – not the norm in the 70’s – are in almost every home near the lake today. The law allows up to 8.7% of dishwashing detergent (by volume) to be phosphorous. This may not seem like much until you realize that *one pound of phosphorus can grow 700 pounds of algae!*

The following is a list of the phosphate content in different brands of dishwashing detergent. Phosphate is not a necessity when it comes to getting things clean.

Save the Lake – Use a Dishwashing Detergent without Phosphate

Dishwashing Detergents (for automatic dishwashers)	Percentage Phosphate Content
Bi-O-Kleen Powder	0
Citrus Magic Gel	0
Ecover Liquid	0
Seventh Generation Liquid or Powder	0
Shaklee Powder	0
Sun & Earth Tablet	0
Trader Joes's Automatic Dishwashing Detergent	0
Wave Liquid	0
Planet Powder	0
Palmolive Gel	1.6%
Electra-Sol Gel	3.7%
Wal-Mart Automatic Dishwashing Detergent Gel	4.0%
Pure Power Gel	4.0%
Sunlight Liquid	4.3%
Electra-Sol Powder	4.5%
Sunlight Powder	4.5%
Cascade Liquid	5.0%
Cascade Complete Liquid	5.0%
Pure Power Powder	5.3%
Hannaford Dishwasher Detergent Powder	5.3%
Shaw's Automatic Powder	6.0%
Wal-Mart Automatic Dishwashing Detergent Powder	6.3%
Cascade Pure Rinse Powder	6.4%
Cascade Action Pac Tablet	8.0%
Electra-Sol Tablets	8.7%
Electra-Sol Gel Pac	8.7%

If your store does not carry a non phosphate brand, just ask for it. If customers started requesting these products, they would quickly be made available.

Sources:

<http://www.assabriver.org/take-action/prevent-pollution/detergents>

<http://www.grist.org/advice/ask/2006/09/20/phosphates/>

http://www.treehugger.com/files/2007/02/how_to_green_your_dishwasher.php

http://www.treehugger.com/files/2007/03/ask_treehugger_whats_the_dirt_on_phosphate-free_soaps.php