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Control available for zebra mussels

The Otsego County Conservation Association recently announced that zebra mussel control filters are available locally to help fight the spread of the invasive species in Otsego and Canadarago lakes.

The Bruce Hall Home Center in Cooperstown is offering "the Shredder," a device manufactured by Primar Filtration of Penn Yan, which company officials said has been in use for 15 years in the Finger Lakes and Lake Champlain regions, as well as in Canada.

According to a Primar fact sheet, the filter can accommodate a minimum flow rate of 80 gallons per minute and will not be affected by strong system back-flushing. Because the Shredder is an offshore installation, zebra mussels never even enter the water system, eliminating repair costs and cleaning expenses that often occur when zebra mussels have colonized in household plumbing. For details on installation of the Primar Shredder, call the Bruce Hall Home Center at 547-9961.

Charles R. O'Neill, Jr., a zebra mussel expert with New York Sea Grant, advises homeowners using a zebra-mussel-infested water body as a water source to take early action to keep the mussels out of the onshore component of their systems.

OCCA officials said zebra mussel controls come in two type: onshore and offshore. Onshore components are generally simpler and less costly to protect from the zebra mussel, but more difficult and costly to clean when infested. Conversely, offshore components are more difficult and expensive to protect against clogging, but easier to clean out once infested.

"In some cases, permits may be required, so homeowners should check with the village of Cooperstown's Watershed Supervisory Committee before taking action," said Erik Miller, OCCA executive director.

According to a Sea Grant fact sheet dealing with private resident control of zebra mussels, multi-resident zebra mussel control systems may reduce installation costs, and a long-term solution to the problem of zebra mussel infestation may be to extend public water systems to areas not already serviced.

The Otsego County Conservation Association has posted articles related to the zebra mussel on its website at www.occainfo.org. OCCA is a private, nonprofit environmental membership organization dedicated to promoting the enjoyment and sustainable use of Otsego County's natural resources through education, advocacy, resource management, research, and planning.

For more information on OCCA, call 547-4488 or visit www.occainfo.org.