

At times, RRWA's customers have experienced earthy and musty tastes and odors in their drinking water. RRWA would like to share the following information which we hope answers our customers' questions about these tastes and odors in their drinking water:

Why does my water sometimes have an earthy and musty taste and odor?

Earthy and musty tastes and odors in RRWA's water are most likely caused by two naturally occurring chemical compounds that can be found in Rathbun Lake. These compounds are geosmin and 2-methylisoborneol.

Is RRWA's water safe to drink?

Yes, RRWA's water is safe to drink. The tastes and odors caused by geosmin and 2-methylisoborneol in drinking water will not have any direct health impacts.

How do these taste and odor causing compounds get into Rathbun Lake?

The most likely source of geosmin and 2-methylisoborneol in Rathbun Lake are cyanobacteria (or blue-green algae) blooms that occur in the lake.

When do these tastes and odors most commonly occur?

The most intense earthy and musty tastes and odors in RRWA's water usually occur in late summer and early fall when conditions in Rathbun Lake favor algae blooms.

How long do these earthy and musty tastes and odors typically last?

As long as conditions in Rathbun Lake favor algae blooms, these tastes and odors could persist in RRWA's water.

Does RRWA's water treatment remove these taste and odor causing compounds?

RRWA's water treatment does remove some of the geosmin and 2-methylisoborneol in the water from Rathbun Lake. However, many individuals are very sensitive to the tastes and odors caused by extremely small concentrations of these compounds.

What steps does RRWA take to improve the taste and odor of the water?

RRWA takes several steps to try to improve the taste and odor of the water we supply to our customers. These steps include:

- RRWA uses granular activated carbon in our filters to help remove taste and odor causing compounds as well as other contaminants.
- RRWA uses sodium permanganate to break down substances that can cause tastes and odors in the water.
- RRWA has an active water main flushing program that helps maintain the quality of drinking water in our distribution system.
- RRWA has taken a leadership role in working with landowners, communities, and others in the Rathbun Lake watershed to help protect the quality of water in the lake.
- Most importantly, RRWA regularly monitors the water in our treatment plant and distribution system to ensure that it is always safe for our customers to drink and use.

Should customers contact RRWA about the taste and odor of the water?

Yes, RRWA encourages our customers to contact us with any questions, concerns, and comments about their drinking water. For non-emergencies, RRWA customers can call 1-800-233-8849 between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:30 pm Monday to Friday. For emergencies, RRWA customers can call the same number, 1-800-233-8849, at any time. RRWA customers can also send emails to rrwainc@rrwa.net.