

It is The Time of The Weeds

Distribute 02-13-2020

The dry hot summer meant that the winter weeds were able to launch themselves into growth from bare ground when the rains and cool weather arrived. The result is that broadleaf weeds such as henbit, chickweed, thistle, bedstraw and dandelions are prospering. Rescue grass and annual bluegrass the grassy winter weeds are also covering lots of ground.

If your broadleaf weeds are growing in the lawn you have several options for control. Products such as Weed Clear, Weed-Be-Gone, and Trimec with 2-4D as an active ingredient can be sprayed on the lush new foliage. One product Fertilome's Weed Free Zone is especially effective because it works at cooler temperatures than its competitors. It is available in concentrate, hose end and direct spray formulas. Read and follow the label instructions.

If the broadleaf weeds are growing in your flower, vegetable or shrub border gardens it is harder to use a 2-4D product because they will injure or kill the desirable plantings. It is essential however to pull the weeds out. Weeds such as henbit and chickweed are especially damaging because in addition to competing for moisture and nutrients, the dense foliage they produce causes other plants to be shaded and decompose in the suffocating lush growth. Toss the pulled weeds into the compost pile.

Bedstraw is especially interesting. It is aggressive and will grow over the top of other plants but if you don't wait too long to pull it, the long vines can even be collected by raking. Visit plantanswers.com if you want to see photos to identify the various weeds.

The best way to control grassy weeds in the lawn is to keep them mowed. If your neighborhood is like mine with shallow, poor soils and lots of shade, the winter lawn provided by mowed rescue grass or annual bluegrass may be more attractive than the summer lawn, and you do not need to irrigate or fertilize it!

Contact herbicides for grasses such as Poast, Fusilade, and Grass-Be Gone will work on rescue grass and annual bluegrass but it is slow acting when the weather is cool.

The cool weather grassy weeds will decline and disappear when it warms up in April, just in time for the St Augustine, zoysia or Bermuda permanent grass to take over. If you do feed the lawn wait until then to fertilize with a slow-release lawn fertilizer such as 19-5-9.

If you are blessed with the summer grassy weeds such as sand burs and crabgrass, and would like to reduce their presence, now is also the time to apply a preemergent herbicide such as Amaze, XL2G, or Dimension. If the granules are applied in February or early March, they will reduce sandbur and crabgrass germination. Sand burs germinate over a long growing season, so the control works even better if herbicide granules are applied again on or about June 1. Follow the label instructions.