

Winter Weed Prevention and Summer Weed Control

Distribute 08-20-2020

With the continuing hot weather we have “enjoyed” it is hard to think about controlling winter weeds, but if you don’t take action to prevent them, expect the henbit, chickweed, dandelions, thistle, bedstraw, rescue grass, annual bluegrass, beggars’ lice and other annual weeds to germinate as soon as the weather cools. The most effective strategy to prevent winter weeds is to apply a granular preemergent herbicide to the lawn, shrub border, and perennial garden about September 1. Your favorite nursery probably offers at least 3 or 4 products from which to choose.

Select the product that will work best for your landscape by comparing the labels list of weeds that it will prevent with the weeds in your landscape that bother you the most. The most significant difference between the preemergent herbicides is that some are formulated to target broad-leaf weeds, and some are most effective in preventing grassy weeds. Some products such as Dimension, Amaze, and XL do a good job of controlling both types of weeds.

For more guidance of selecting the right preemergent herbicide for your landscape you can seek the recommendations of the nursery staff. If they make a recommendation, review the label to verify that the product will do the job you want done on your landscape, or you can seek out information about the product on the internet. The labels of available products can be obtained and reviewed on the internet.

It is also effective to seek advice from a neighbor that has obvious success in controlling weeds.

One issue to consider is the effect of a preemergent herbicide on wildflowers. If the wildflowers are annuals that reseed each year like the listed weeds, the herbicide will prevent them from germinating just as effectively as the weeds. The same thing goes for the flower garden if you seed some of the flowers. Some gardeners that use transplants have it work. The preemergent herbicide allows the transplant to grow but prevents the weeds that grow from seed from germinating and competing with the flowers. That result is not always automatic so experiment and rely on the label guidance.

Most years when we discuss preventing winter weeds, we also have the maturing summer weeds to consider. The heat and drought have prevented most summer weeds this year, but you may have Bermuda grass invading the garden space and some nutsedge growing in irrigated beds. Contact herbicides are sprayed on the target weed. They can be purchased as concentrate for mixing or premixed in spray form.

Control invasive Bermuda grass with a contact herbicide for grasses. The products that work well include Poast, Fusilade, Over-the Top, Grass-be Gone, and Ornamec. The key to success is that the Bermuda grass must be green and growing. The products are not effective for controlling a raised bed of dried out Bermuda grass. It does work however if you green-up the bed with water and then apply the contact herbicide. The contact herbicides for grassy weeds do not hurt non-grass plants Follow label instructions.

Nutsedge is a weed that resembles a grass, but the contact herbicides for grasses do not affect it. The usual place for nutsedge to plague gardeners is in irrigated lawns and garden beds. Products such as Sedgehammer and Image that control nutsedge will control the weed in lawns without hurting the grass,

but be careful in gardens and shrub borders, some contact herbicides for nutsedge injure other garden plants. Study the label for products formulated to control nutsedge to determine where it is safe to use it.