**WEB**

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**“Controlling Weeds”**

Bermuda grass and sandburs are among the most annoying summer weeds.

If you have a Bermuda grass lawn, it has probably responded well to the warm weather and rain, filling in the lawn area. Mow it low—1.5 inches or less—for best performance. Although Bermuda grass is well adapted for a lawn in full sun, it is also one of the toughest weed problems when it moves into the garden, shrub border and other lawn grasses.

Bermuda grass spreads by seed—rhizomes under the ground and stolons over the ground. You can pull it up, but it is hard to pull and pieces of the root break off to form new plants. It will even spread when broken pieces of the stem are dropped and make contact with the soil.

The most effective control tactic is to spray it with a contact herbicide formulated for grassy weeds. There are many such products; some that come to mind are Over the Top, Grass Be Gone, Fusilade and Ornamec.

Spray the herbicide, diluted as instructed on the label, and it will not hurt flowers, shrubs or groundcovers. It takes the products several weeks to work, but spray it over the actively growing Bermuda grass and the weed will quit growing within a few days and slowly turn brown over a two- to three-week period. The best part is that the grass-specific contact herbicides kill the roots along with the tops of the plant.

The grass-specific contact herbicide can’t be used in the active vegetable garden according to the label, so Bermuda grass has to be hand-weeded among the vegetables. You can make pulling Bermuda grass easier by using mulch. Mulch reduces the growth of Bermuda grass and prevents much of the rooted mats of Bermuda grass that usually occur.

One of the toughest places to control Bermuda grass is in other lawn grass species. If your Zoysia or St. Augustine lawn is growing in full sun, subjected to traffic and/or drought, Bermuda grass often finds its way into the lawn. Mowing high, aerating and watering adequately helps St. Augustine fight off Bermuda invasions. Products with the active ingredient fluazifop, such as Fusilade, can be used to control Bermuda grass in Zoysia lawns. Follow the labeled instructions.

The easiest way to control sandburs is to use a pre-emergent, such as Amaze or Crabgrass Preventer in early March and then again at the end of May. If you didn’t do that and now have sandburs growing in the lawn or a vacant lot, you can spray the area or plants with Image or Manage. The spray takes some time to work and, in the meantime, burs may form. For plants with burs already in place, use the tip of your shovel to pop them out of the ground. The burs are the seed so the popped plants, complete with green burs, need to be discarded in the garbage.

If you really let the sandburs get out of control and the burs mature, you can do two things: 1. Mark your calendar for next March 1 to spread Amaze or Crabgrass Preventer; and 2. Drag a carpet remnant over the bur-infested area to collect as many of the burs as possible. Every bur that sticks to the carpet and is discarded is one less bur to stick to your pant leg or the dog’s coat or foot pad and one less seed for a new sandbur plant next summer.

**“Garden Tasks”**

We are now in the hot part of the summer, a good time to prune oaks, if necessary. Even at this time of the year it is a good idea to paint the wounds immediately after the cuts are made. The paint prevents oak wilt infection.

Control fire ants with a bait such as Conserve or Amdro. Follow the labeled instructions.

Crape Myrtles make a great addition to the landscape for summer color. Select the flower color and size that fits the space you have available. Most nurseries have a chart to review color and size characteristics.

Open up webworm nests with a long cane pole. Wasps, birds and sun will reduce the caterpillar population.