

Fall Weed Control

The optimal timing for applying pre-emergence herbicides to control winter annuals is prior to germination—early August through mid-September.

There are good reasons to think about weed control in the fall for turf and landscape areas. Weed species with a winter annual life cycle will begin to germinate in the late summer and continue to germinate through mid-October. Species such as annual bluegrass, corn speedwell and common chickweed will grow vegetatively in the autumn and will often be inconspicuous in lawns. In early spring, as the temperature begins to rise, they produce flowers, set seed and begin to die. This process can continue well into June. As the winter annuals are completing their life cycle in the spring, their yellowish appearance makes them unattractive in turf and in the landscape. Their presence can also create bare areas in the lawn which provide ideal areas for summer annual weeds to germinate.

The optimal timing for applying pre-emergence herbicides to control winter annuals is prior to germination—early August through mid-September.

Irrigation or rainfall should occur within 3 to 7 days in order to move the chemical into the seed germination zone. Because of the long period of germination, winter annual weeds are often more difficult to control than other annual weeds.

In bare areas of turf that are to be re-seeded, fall applications of most pre-emergence herbicides should be avoided. Siduron (TUPERSAN) can be applied pre-emergence or on small seedlings of Kentucky bluegrass of

fescue to control most annual grass weeds. Unfortunately, annual bluegrass is not controlled. Ethofumesate (PROGRASS) can be applied to newly planted perennial ryegrass or established Kentucky bluegrass. Common chickweed and annual bluegrass should be controlled.

Perennial Weeds

The fall is also the best time of year for controlling many perennial weeds in turf and in landscaped areas. At this time, the plants are translocating carbohydrates manufactured in the leaves

into the roots and rhizomes. Systemic herbicides applied at this time are readily carried downward into these organs, allowing for more complete control.

Usually there will be less volatility of the hormone type herbicides, such as 2,4-D, Trimec or Turflon D when they are applied in cool weather. Ester formulations, which are often more effective on hard-to-control weeds can be more safely applied during this time of year. These post-emergence herbicides should always be applied in calm weather to avoid drift to non-target plants.

September is a good time to clean up invasive perennial broadleaf weeds such as mugwort, field bindweed and Canada thistle and Japanese knotweed in ornamental areas. Spot spraying with a non-selective systemic herbicide such as glyphosate (ROUNDUP) will help greatly in controlling these weeds for next season. In order for ROUNDUP to penetrate and translocate to the roots of these perennial weeds, the leaves must be green and fairly healthy and the plants must be actively growing. ROUNDUP will not be very effective if the air temperature is below 50°F.

Inventory Your Weeds!

The fall is the best time to evaluate your current weed control practices, determine which weeds are escaping and plan a strategy for next year. Remember that the best and least expensive weed control in turf is a healthy vigorous sod which will prevent most weed seeds from establishing. Proper fertility, pH, aeration, insect and disease control are all aspects of good turf management that are essential for good weed control.

ANDREW SENESAC,

LONG ISLAND HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH LABORATORY

Table 1. Herbicides for Fall Weed Control

Winter Annual	Pre-emergence Control (one of the following)
Annual Bluegrass	<i>turf & landscape</i> DCPA-DACTHAL pendimethalin-HALTS, Pre-M, others oxadiazon-ROSTAR bensulide-BETASAN, many others <i>turf only</i> benefin+trifluralin-TEAM benefin-BALAN <i>landscape only</i> trifluralin-TREFLAN oryzalin-SURFLAN napropamide-DEVIRINOL metolachlor-PENNANT
Corn Speedwell (Veronica arvensis)	<i>turf & landscape</i> oxadiazon-ROSTAR
Common Chickweed	<i>turf & landscape</i> DCPA-DACTHAL pendimethalin-HALTS, Pre-M, others <i>turf only</i> benefin+trifluralin-TEAM <i>landscape only</i> trifluralin-TREFLAN oryzalin-SURFLAN napropamide-DEVIRINOL simazine-PRINCEP

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Editor-in-Chief: Norman W. Hummel, Jr.
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