



SPRING

HERBICIDES – THE KINDS WE USE AND WHY

There are many types of weed and grass controls used in a good lawn and landscape maintenance program. Each has its purpose and proper timing.

For turf weeds like crabgrass, foxtail and several others which are annuals, we like to stop them before they sprout in the spring. **Pre-emergents** are used for this to keep them from even sprouting.

Broadleaf weeds like dandelions, wild violets, plantain and spurge are usually controlled with **post-emergent** herbicides when they are actively growing.

In the lawn and landscape nutsedge or nutgrass can be an aggravating problem that neither of the types mentioned above are able to control. There are, however, some specific herbicides that do control this light yellow-green and fast-growing weed.

Weeds: They Gotta Be Growing To Die

IT TAKES A WELL-TIMED AND CAREFUL PROGRAM TO KEEP CONTROL

Broadleaf weeds are extremely persistent pests, and no matter how vigilant we are in our efforts to eradicate them, they'll always be back. Dandelions, plantain, clover and spurge are all common broadleaf weeds that just love to ruin the good looks of your lawn.

WHAT MAKES THEM SO HARD TO CONTROL?


Many of the most troublesome broadleaf weeds are perennials. Therefore, pre-emergent herbicides (like those used to prevent crabgrass from sprouting) aren't effective against these established weeds.

Instead, post-emergent herbicides must be used to kill broadleaf weeds that are actively growing and visible in your lawn. If all of these pests popped up at the same time, and only once during the growing season, then one spot treatment with post-emergent herbicides would take care of your broadleaf weed problems for the entire year.

But that's not the case. It all comes down to the fact that there will always be broadleaf weed seeds moving and being carried into your lawn. And unfortunately, these seeds don't all sprout at the same time. They germinate continuously during good growing weather, making repeated applications of herbicides a necessity. Plus, it can take up to three full weeks after an application before mature treated weeds die and fade from sight, so you'll need to be patient.

HELPING YOUR LAWN TO HELP ITSELF

As always, a healthy lawn is the best defense against all types of weeds. If your lawn is thick and vigorously growing, it will have an easier time crowding out weed invaders. With regular fertilization, proper irrigation (1" to 1½" per week), and good mowing habits (removing no more than ⅓ of the grass blade at a time), fewer broadleaf weeds will likely rear their ugly heads in your lawn.



A dense lawn is six times more effective than a wheat field and four times better than a hay field at absorbing rainfall.



BEAUTIFUL TURF GOES WAY BACK!

DID YOU KNOW...?

The rules of golf are internationally standardized and are jointly governed by The R&A, spun off in 2004 from The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews (founded 1754), and the United States Golf Association (USGA).

While the modern game of golf originated in 15th century Scotland, the game's ancient origins are unclear and much debated.

A Ming Dynasty scroll dating back to 1368 entitled "The Autumn Banquet" shows a member of the Chinese Imperial court swinging what appears to be a golf club at a small ball with the aim of sinking it into a hole. The game is thought to have been introduced into Europe during the Middle Ages.

The modern game originated in Scotland, where the first written record of the game is James II's banning of the game in 1457, as an unwelcome distraction to learning archery. To many golfers, the Old Course at St. Andrews, a links course dating to before 1574, is considered to be a site of pilgrimage.



Plant Health Care

The most common reason homeowners and business managers call in a tree or lawn expert is because they are concerned something is wrong with their plants. Trees decline, insects and disease attack and the weather often works against us. Sometimes a simple solution is available. At others, a more complex program is needed. Sometimes, when a problem has gone on too long, the plants may be lost.

These types of situations led to the development of Plant Health Care programs. Basically, PHC programs are designed to maintain or improve the health of your plants using the most cost-effective and environmentally sensitive practices and treatments available. They operate by monitoring your landscape. This may be as simple as an annual walk-through or as involved as monthly visits. It depends on the complexity and diversity of your landscape. Often monitoring is done in conjunction with your tree care or lawn care programs; while regular preventive and curative applications are being made, other aspects of your property are checked for healthy growth.

When problems beyond the scope of your regular programs arise, your professional will devise solutions and work with you to implement them.

The main point is to work with professionals who are trained and interested in helping keep your property in top condition – people who know how to spot and identify problems or potential problems and how to communicate effectively with you, the owner.



Mulch – More Than Just “Pretty”

MUCH MORE TO MULCH THAN WHAT MEETS THE EYE

Mulch — most of us think of it as something there to make the ground look good. And a clean edging job and fresh mulch does just that. The consistent color and texture do improve the looks of your shrubs and flowers. In fact, dark colored mulches even widen the pupil of the eye, making bright plants stand out even more. Mulching also cuts down a lot on the amount of time and effort it will take to keep your beds and your whole property looking better throughout the entire season. Here are some of the advantages of spring mulching.

SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CAN COUNT ON MULCH TO DO FOR YOU

- Prevent many weeds and grasses from sprouting by blocking sunlight from the soil
- Keep up to 21% more moisture in the soil around the root zone
- Help soil stay up to 10 degrees cooler in summer, which reduces stress on the plants

What is the best mulch to use? There is a huge variety of mulch materials available and you can have “bulk” or bagged mulches. Your choice will probably depend on what’s available and your personal preference for color and texture.

Whatever type of mulch you prefer, it’s best to get an early start for the most benefits. So mulch now for an easier and more attractive season later.



Have Three Seasons of Floral Beauty

Did you ever consider having three full seasons of color on your property? You can, and it’s fairly easy! By using early to late bulbs in spring, annuals in the summer and mums in the fall – plus your flowering trees and shrubs – you’ll have non-stop color almost year-round. Here are a few tips that may make your personal “flower show” more successful.

There are two basic ways to plan floral displays. You can go for the maximum visual impact or “wow appeal” by having a few massive beds of one or two types of flowers. The challenge with this approach is that in trying to keep the garden fresh, you need to eliminate the spring bulbs before planting the summer annuals. And then do the same again in fall when the chrysanthemums are ready to become your focal point. This process is more work and some more expense, but you can really knock the socks off of your guests and neighbors with massive flows of color.

The second basic approach is to plant your flowers in a border-type bed of mixed types of plants. With this approach, you will mix all of the different kinds of flowers through the season, so that as your bulb foliage dies down your annuals begin to thrive and help cover the browning bulb leaves. Many gardeners find this approach more enjoyable for the variety it delivers year round. And you can include small shrubs and perennials as well. Planning a great mixed garden takes careful planning with consideration of blooming times and height of the different plants chosen.

The hardest part of creating a floral show comes first – improving the soil. As with all kinds of gardens the old saying also holds true for flower beds, “for every dime you spend on plants, put ninety cents into the soil.” Incorporate organic material and lots of it. You can use compost, rotted manure,

peat moss or any combination of these. Just be sure it’s mixed in really well and deep.

Once the soil is ready, the fun can begin! In selecting your spring bulbs, the choices are enough to boggle the mind. And since most bulbs bloom either early spring, mid-spring or late spring, you can have a succession of beauty and enjoyment just from the bulbs you select. It’s good to be aware that some bulbs (like daffodils) continue to multiply and stay vigorous from year to year while others (like tulips) tend to dwindle in quantity and quality if not pulled out and separated each year. A great feature of bulbs is that most get planted in the fall, so all winter you can imagine the show you’ll have in the spring.

There is also an abundance of summer annuals from which to choose. Be sure to select annuals that will work well in the amount of sun your garden gets and how well you’ll be able to water during hot, dry periods.

Even though most annuals will keep blooming until cold weather, extending the fall with one more change is exciting. Like all the plants we’ve been talking about mums come in a variety of size, color and texture. The standard garden mum is a good performer almost every year. From rust to deep reds and bright yellows and whites, groupings of three or five plants (or more) add a great burst of color to an almost-finished season.

The great thing to remember is that you can “jump onboard” during any season and enjoy the wonderful feeling of watching something you’ve planted grow!

Beware the Chipmunk!

Just a warning that most bulbs provide a very tasty meal for moles, chipmunks and other small rodents. One bright spot is the daffodil. They are poisonous to animals and so they’re left alone to brighten your spring and multiply year after year!



A little bit of a head start is good. Too much is not.

Some gardeners are so anxious for spring when they turn over some soil and grow fresh vegetables, that they start seeds indoors so that they have plants ready “as soon as it’s time” to plant.

GET THE TIMING RIGHT If you start seeds too early, they get too tall and leggy and are not strong enough to survive. If you wait till later, many times you’re better off waiting and planting directly into the garden when the temperature is right. That way there is no need for transplanting.

EVERY SEED TYPE IS DIFFERENT You’ll want to carefully read the backs of your seed packs for planting and thinning instructions, and the number of days each flower or vegetable requires to germinate.

IF YOU TRY... You’ll want plenty of light. Fluorescent lights on a timer work well. Some air circulation is also helpful, as well as careful watering.

So for those whose green thumb starts itching, good luck and great gardening!



© 2013 Focal Point Communications B2-13

Tulips are Beautiful...But This was Too Much!

European explorers were overwhelmed with the beauty of the tulips they found growing in Turkish gardens in the early 1500’s. They returned with stories of flowers that looked like upside-down turbans or tulibands, as the Turkish called them. The name stuck and eventually was shortened to tulip.

Tulips made their way to Holland by the early 1600’s.

They became so popular that a tulip craze, called “Tulipomania,” overtook the small country in 1634 and sent bulb prices soaring. They were worth their weight in gold. In fact, at the peak of the tulip mania, in February 1637, some single tulip bulbs sold for more than 10 times the annual income of a skilled craftsman.

Within a few years the market crashed and left much of the Dutch population penniless. Holland has since resumed its place in the bulb industry and is now the world’s largest producer of tulip bulbs.

