

# HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER

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## **WEEDS ARE THRIVING, LAWNS AREN'T**

The one thing most lawns have in common right now is an overabundance of weeds. As we are slowly exiting an extreme summer, it is becoming obvious that weeds are invading the areas left vacant by receding and dying turf.

Two of the most common weeds are crabgrass and nutsedge. These relentless invaders are a big nuisance to homeowners who are working to build a healthy lawn. So what can be done?

### Crabgrass

By far the best way to control crabgrass is to prevent it by maintaining a good, thick lawn. Crabgrass is an annual that must come up from seed each year and the seed must have light in order to germinate. If a lawn is thick and healthy much less light will reach the soil and less crabgrass will actually germinate.

The problem is that in Kansas a thick and healthy lawn is not easy to maintain, so many times it is necessary to apply crabgrass preventer in the spring. The preventer kills the seeds as they germinate but doesn't really have an effect on crabgrass that has already come up. There are other products that will kill crabgrass after germination including:

Ortho Weed-B-Gon Max+Crabgrass Control and Bayer All-in-One Lawn Weed and Crabgrass Killer. These products contain quinclorac, which is a crabgrass herbicide, as well as other ingredients that control broadleaf weeds. Also available to homeowners is a formulation of quinclorac under the trade name of Drive that is available from Monterey Lawn and Garden.

Crabgrass starts to decline around late August and this is the time that cool season grasses start to come out of the summer slow down. This makes September the perfect time to overseed and renovate lawns that have heavy infestations of the weed. Don't forget-thick and healthy is the best defense.

### Nutsedge

Yellow nutsedge is not quite a grass, but still looks like one. It is yellow green and has a triangular stems with leaves coming off in three directions. It often grows at a faster pace than the turf and so it sticks out.

Yellow nutsedge will often come into a yard from seed. Once it's established it produces little nutlets or bulbs under the ground from which it spreads.

If there are only a few plants you may be able to gain control by pulling it-although pulling will stimulate the nutlets that are underground to sprout-making repeat pulling necessary until the plant is killed.

A thick lawn is really the best bet against nutsedge, but there are chemicals that can help with major infestations. SedgeHammer is a commonly used product against nutsedge. With SedgeHammer it is important to add a spreader sticker or surfactant to the spray to help it actually stick to the waxy leaf. Repeat sprays are often necessary to gain control. When applying the herbicide, avoid mowing three to five days before and after treatment. To ensure adequate herbicide absorption, do not water the lawn for at least 24 to 48 hours after product application. Applications work best in the late spring/early summer when the nutsedge is young, actively growing, and is most sensitive to herbicidal control. Once nutsedge matures, control is difficult regardless of the treatment schedule.