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LAWN

Pests and Problems



Federal Cooperative Extension Service
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LAWN

Pests and Problems

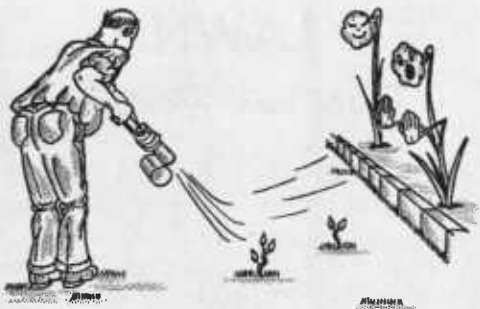
A well established lawn and proper fertilizing, mowing, and watering to encourage vigorous, dense growth of lawn grasses are of primary importance in controlling pests. The practices discussed here should be supplemental to proper lawn care.

Weed Control

Lawn weeds are of two types, broadleaf and weedy grasses. Common broadleaf weeds are dandelions, chickweed, plantain, speedwell, and clovers. Weedy grasses include velvet grass, quackgrass, ryegrass, annual bluegrass, and crabgrass. Each of the two types requires different control methods.

Broadleaf weeds

Most broadleaf weeds are killed by 2,4-D. Many commercial lawn weed killers (herbicides) contain both 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T. Some of the "hard-to-kill" weeds, such as chickweed, the clovers, and speedwell, are more effectively controlled with 2,4,5-T or 2,4,5-TP (Silvex or Kuron). In using any of these herbicides, carefully follow directions on the container.



Use care in applying weed killers.

Speedwell (Veronica) is a hard-to-kill lawn weed. Endothal used at 3 tablespoons in 3 to 4 gallons of water per 1,000 square feet is the most effective control. Spray when the weeds and grass are growing rapidly. A second application should be made in 10 days. Endothal is available in gallon containers. Suppliers indicate that this will soon be available in small containers.

Chickweed, a common lawn weed, is best controlled by 2,4,5-TP (Silvex or Kuron). Use 2 tablespoons in 3 to 4 gallons of water per 1,000 square feet. Use the same precautions when spraying with 2,4,5-TP as when spraying with 2,4-D.

Be careful to avoid injury with herbicides to other susceptible plants including trees, vines, shrubs, and flowers. Avoid

windy days and hot days when the sprays are quite volatile. Use plenty of water (3 to 4 gallons per 1,000 square feet) with the herbicides. Coarse sprays with low pressure are better than fine sprays. Rig up a protective cover over the spray nozzle or hold a cardboard, board, or heavy paper between the spray and susceptible plants.

Apply treatment when weeds are growing rapidly—in late spring or early fall. Don't mow for 3 to 4 days before spraying or for 2 days after spraying. It takes 2 to 4 weeks for a complete kill. Retreatment may be necessary. Postpone spraying new lawns until the grass is at least 60 days old.

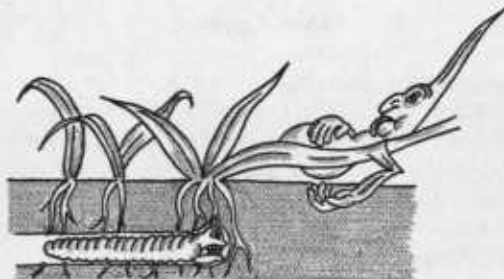
Weedy grasses

Weedy grasses are difficult to control since broadleaf weed killers are ineffective on them. Weeding them out during the seedling stage of growth is best. Unwanted grass can be distinguished from the lawn grasses by difference in color, texture, vigor, and growth habits.

Treating established clumps with the grass killer, Dalapon, or digging them out is best. Use $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of Dalapon in three gallons of water. Spray only the unwanted grass plant. The killed area can be reseeded or resodded in about 60 days. Replanting the lawn is advised where large areas are affected with undesired grass types.

Crabgrass can be controlled with chlordane or commercial "crabgrass killers." Use commercial products according to directions on the label. Apply 3 pints of 44-48% chlordane emulsifiable concentrate (liquid) in 3 to 10 gallons of water per 1,000 square feet. Apply in May before the crabgrass seeds germinate. Water the turf immediately after application before children or pets are allowed on treated area.

Velvet grass can be controlled with Karmex diuron in bluegrass and bentgrass lawns. Fine fescue lawns are damaged with the Karmex sprays. Karmex is not recommended for eastern Oregon lawn spraying. Use 1½ ounces (4 pounds per acre) per 1,000 square feet of lawn. Spray in November or December. Use 2 gallons of water per 1,000 square feet. Do not spray lawns which are predominately velvet grass or annual grasses. Diuron Karmex is a soil sterilant chemical and must be used carefully when used selectively. Home owners without good equipment should have this spray applied by experienced commercial applicators who have spray equipment with booms and mechanical agitation. Over-spraying the lawn with Karmex will kill or damage the regular lawn grass. When the grass is killed or damaged, it takes several months before the damaged area can be reseeded.



Insect Control

Sod webworms are the most damaging of lawn insects. Their feeding causes grass to die in rapidly growing irregular brown spots. If present, the worms can be found by breaking apart a section of the dying sod. The adult form—small tan moths—are often seen flying over lawns about dusk.

White grubs occasionally feed on grass roots and can cause serious damage. Ants and earwigs do not feed on grass, but may be a nuisance.

All of these insects can be controlled with sprays, dusts, or granules of heptachlor, aldrin, or lindane available at garden, lawn, and seed stores. Follow the directions on the label.

Moss Control

The presence of moss primarily indicates lack of fertility. It may also indicate improper watering, too much shade, poorly drained and compacted soils, or a very acid soil. Correcting any of these unfavorable situations will help prevent moss. Following a regular fertilizer program, however, is especially important. Acid soils can be corrected by adding 75 to 150 pounds of lime per 1,000 square feet.

To get rid of moss follow one of these methods:

1. Rake out by hand. Reseed, if necessary, and fertilize.
2. Apply ammonium sulfate at 8 to 10 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Don't water, but let it "burn out" the moss. Though temporarily damaged, the grass will recover rapidly.
3. Several commercial products are effective in killing moss if used according to directions.

Mushrooms, Toadstools, and Puffballs

Mushrooms, toadstools, and puffballs are generally not a serious problem. Their presence indicates high organic matter content

in the soil. Hand picking usually will control them for the current year. Regular mowing and lawn fertilization are helpful. Occasionally they are associated with turf disease, such as fairy ring, which is described below. In this case, controlling the disease will control the mushrooms, toadstools, and puffballs.

Disease Control

Turf diseases are sometimes a problem in lawns. They are quite difficult to control, though certain practices—such as good drainage, prevention of excessive watering, proper fertilization, and proper mowing, help hold them in check. Each disease must be individually treated at certain times of the year. Various fungicides are used for this purpose.

Conditions arising from a lack of fertility, improper watering or mowing, or a lack of other good lawn practices are often mistaken for diseases. Perhaps no more than 10% of such cases are actually turf diseases. *There is no substitute for proper lawn care.*

Fairy ring is one of the more common and most difficult diseases to control. It shows up as rings or semicircles of dark green grass and adjacent brown dead areas. Mushrooms, puffballs, or toadstools are

often found in the ring. The best control measure is the removal of all soil in the circle 6 inches deep and 6 inches beyond outer growth of the ring. Drench with a mercury fungicide, replace with clean soil, and replant.

Rodent Control

Moles, gophers, and mice are best controlled with traps or poison baits. Each requires certain kinds of traps and baits for best results.



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