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Mark Keaton's Extension News: Broadleaf weed control in your lawn

Prevention is always the best method when it comes to controlling weeds in your lawn. The most effective way to control weeds in a lawn is a dense vigorous turf. Any practice that helps produce thick turf discourages weeds. Chemical herbicides are available as supplements to good management for controlling problem weeds. Herbicides only aid cultural methods.

For control of broadleaf weeds post emerge (after the weeds are up), use phenoxy herbicides. The phenoxy herbicides include 2, 4-D, dicamba, dichlorprop, MCPA, mecoprop, carfentrazone and various combinations of these. They are for broadleaf weed control and have very little effect on most grasses. However, you should not use phenoxy herbicides on your warm-season lawn during the spring green up period because injury to your lawn may occur. The various three-way combinations of the phenoxy herbicides such as Trimec Classic, Super Trimec, Trimec Southern, Weed-B-Gon are more expensive, but they will control a broader spectrum of broadleaf weeds than one herbicide alone. You should use extreme caution to avoid spray drift when applying a phenoxy herbicide. Plants such as tomatoes, okra, roses and many shrubs may be injured or killed from drift of these herbicides.

For the most effective weed control, phenoxy herbicides should be applied when the weeds are small (two to four leaf stage) and there is good soil moisture. Also, the temperature should be between 60 and 90 degrees for eight to 10 hours for all phenoxy herbicide applications. Apply the herbicide when there is no rain in the forecast for the next 24 hours.

You should use 2 4-D products for control of wild garlic, dandelion, henbit, chickweed, plaintain, dock species and other broadleaf weeds. Use a higher rate on wild garlic than you would use on the other broadleaf weeds. Using 2,4-D in combination with dichlorprop, mecoprop, dicamba, MCPA or carfentrazone on most annual and perennial broadleaf weeds does a better job than 2,4-D alone.

With all herbicides, read and follow the label directions and precautions. Always wash your sprayer with soap and water after using a phenoxy herbicide. Then put three tablespoons of ammonia cleaner per gallon of water in the sprayer and let the solution sit for 24 hours. Rinse the sprayer again prior to using. You should not use a sprayer that has had a lawn herbicide used in it to spray an insecticide or fungicide on your vegetables, trees, shrubs or flowers. You could damage or kill these plants if you do.

For more information on lawns contact the University Of Arkansas, Division Of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service at 425-2335.