

With the gardening season now underway, I have noticed the media has been bombarding us with all sorts of chemical terminology. Sometimes it can be overwhelming and a bit confusing. Perhaps I can help to clear the confusion.

Did you know the word Kleenex® and Roundup® have something very much in common? They are both trade names. Kleenex® is nothing more than a facial tissue. However, because of its well-known trade name, and probably because it was one of the first on the market, it is frequently used synonymously when referring to all facial tissues. In the early 70's Monsanto created the herbicide called Roundup®. Roundup® is the trade name for the herbicide chemical called glyphosate. Since then many other chemical companies manufacture glyphosate, but because Roundup® was first on the scene, the name became popular, like Kleenex®. As a result, Roundup® is often used synonymously when referring to all glyphosate products.

This brings us to the terms non-selective and selective. The fact is all glyphosate products are non-selective herbicides. Non-selective means the herbicide is designed to destroy all green plant material on which it is applied. A selective herbicide targets only a particular weed or particular weeds.

Recently, Monsanto has developed a new product to which they have given the trade name, Roundup for Lawns®. The chemical makeup of this new Roundup product is entirely different from the original. Roundup® contains glyphosate, a non-selective chemical designed to kill all green vegetation; whereas, Roundup for Lawns® is said to contain selective herbicides. Roundup for Lawns® contains the chemicals MCPA, Dimethylamine salt, Quinclorac, Dicamba, and Sulfentrazone, all designed to destroy broad leaf weeds but not turfgrass. When using this product properly and according to the label, broadleaf weeds such as dandelions are destroyed and the turfgrass remains unharmed. One word of caution. With both products having similar names and their marketing labels looking similar, I foresee a potential problem that could arise if the homeowner confused the two products.

Another bit of confusion arises when we encounter the terminology post-emergent and pre-emergent when using herbicides. A post-emergent herbicide would include both Roundup products that I described above even though they

differ greatly. Post-emergent herbicides are generally applied to the undesirable plants (weeds) after they have become visible and are actively growing. One generally applies pre-emergent herbicides before weeds begin to grow. Pre-emergents do not allow seeds to germinate successfully.

This brings us to more terminology: annuals and perennials. Annuals are plants that begin growing from seed each new season; whereas, perennials generally re-emerge each growing season from the previous season's rootstock. However, since most perennials produce seeds, they, too, are capable of creating a new generation by growing from seed. Crabgrass is a prime example of an annual weed; whereas, a dandelion is an example of a perennial weed. Another difference between these two weeds is one is a grassy weed and the other is a broadleaf weed. At this time of year, we generally apply a pre-emergent herbicide to the lawn to prevent crabgrass seed from successfully germinating. Chemicals for this purpose include the trade names Dimension[®], Barricade[®], Prowl[®], or Treflan[®]. Unfortunately, if one were to apply a pre-emergent herbicide too early or too late in the season, failure to prevent crabgrass seed from germinating could result. If that happens, it is nice to know not all is lost. One would then need to apply a selective, post-emergent herbicide designed to knock down grassy weeds such as crabgrass but not harm the turfgrass. Examples of this type of post-emergent herbicide include the trade names Drive[®], Tenacity[®] or Acclaim[®].

Today, with all the different chemicals available to the home gardener, I can appreciate why such terminology is confusing. Avoid confusion. When in doubt, give me a shout. That's my job and I am more than willing to be of assistance!