

Although one may not see them, rest assured they are most likely there. Not until April, 2017, will one begin to notice them and, by then, it may be too late.

The seeds of many broadleaf weeds such as dandelions, henbit, chickweed and others germinate throughout September and October. During the winter months, they remain nearly obscured, just waiting for spring. Upon spring's arrival, warm moist weather returns, creating ideal growing conditions for these little weeds to grow quickly. Once they reach the flowering stage, the weeds become nearly impossible to control.

The fact is autumn is the ideal time to control many broadleaf weeds in the lawn, and yet, many home owners often wait until spring to declare war on these pests. Why? I have a few theories as to why, but I think the biggest is out of sight, out of mind!

One major advantage of broadleaf weed control in the fall is weed seedlings are small, the stage at which herbicides are most effective. Furthermore, if fully mature, established broadleaf perennial weeds such as dandelion, black medic, creeping jenny, and/or wild violets are growing in the lawn, fall treatment is ideal. These perennials are preparing for dormancy. Their energies are directed downward, toward their roots, storing food for their winter survival. Herbicides applied to perennial broadleaf weeds during autumn target the roots. After being absorbed into the plant tissue, the herbicide is translocated to the roots, thus quietly and effectively killing the weeds during the winter months.

Another strong advantage of applying herbicide treatments in the fall is there will be less damage from herbicide drift to non-target plants that are dormant or near dormant. Contrary, tender, new plant growth, which occurs in the spring, can easily be damaged from herbicide drift.

The question might be what herbicide should one use to effectively control broadleaf weeds in the lawn? Several products exist that prove effective for control of these weeds. Herbicides exist in both granular and liquid formulations. Both are effective; however, each have advantages and disadvantages.

Liquid herbicides are usually more effective than granular products. Lawns should not be mowed for several days before and after the application to allow maximum uptake and translocation of the herbicide. Timing is important. It is best if there is not rainfall or water applied for at least 24 hours after the application.

Granular products often come mixed with fertilizer. If using a combination product for fall fertilization and weed control, special methods should be followed. In order for the herbicide to work efficiently, first the grass should be wet when applying the product. This dampness causes the granular herbicide to stick to the foliage for maximum absorption. It is best to apply the product in the early morning when dew is present or after a rain. Allow the herbicide to be

absorbed into the tissue of the weeds for at least 24 to 48 hours before thoroughly watering the lawn to activate the fertilizer.

One word of caution when applying herbicides in the fall. Fall planted grass seed should not be treated with an herbicide until the new grass seedlings have been mowed two or three times. Instructions on herbicide labels need to be carefully read to determine proper application times for newly seeded lawns.

Suggested herbicides for control of broadleaf weeds in the lawn might contain one or a combination of the following herbicides: 2-4-D, MCP, dicamba, and dithopyr. As with all herbicides, always follow label directions when using.

Although nearly out of sight, broadleaf weed seeds are now germinating in the lawn. Autumn is the ideal time to control them.