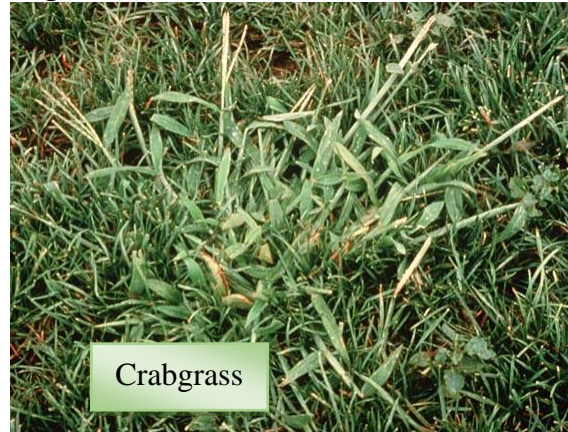


The war begins. I avoided using a pre-emergent herbicide on our lawn last spring; nor did I use any post-emergent herbicides. I now have more weeds than I can tolerate. They include crabgrass, dandelions, white clover, black medic, wild violets and bindweed. I even have a few volunteer trees such as Siberian elm. Although I cut off the weeds when I mow the lawn — they continue to survive.



One might wonder why I chose not to use herbicides last spring. My answer is simple. When spring 2014 arrived, I could see that our lawn had experienced severe winter kill. Although late summer is the ideal time to seed a lawn, I was forced to over-seed the winter-killed areas early last spring. Had I used any herbicides, I would have jeopardized the success of the new grass seed germinating and growing. Fortunately, the new grass grew and filled in the bare areas quite well; but, so did an assortment of weeds. It's now time I zap those buggers.

Did you know the best time to control many weeds in turf grass is from September through most of October?

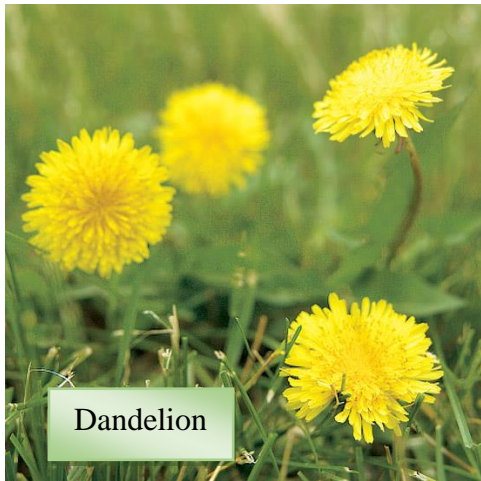
Generally, there are two kinds of weeds: annuals and perennials. Annual weeds grow from seed each year and live for only one growing season. Crabgrass is a prime example of an annual grassy weed. Crabgrass seeds germinate in the spring. It's best controlled with a pre-emergent herbicide applied in early spring. Some weeds are referred to as winter annual weeds — those that germinate from seed in the fall. After germination, these weeds continue to live through the winter as small seedlings. When spring arrives, they grow rampantly. Winter annuals complete their life cycle from early to mid-summer. Examples include henbit, chickweed, yellow wood sorrel and speedwell.

When daytime temperatures range in the 70s, as they often do during the months of September and early October, seeds of winter annuals begin to germinate. Often, they do so undetected. When early spring arrives, these miniscule seedlings kick into high gear and start growing as if on steroids.

Unfortunately, when undergoing such rapid growth, the use of post-emergent herbicides has little effect. As stated before, by early summer, these annual weeds reach maturity, produce seeds and the plant dies.

To prevent germination of these winter annual seeds, apply a pre-emergent herbicide such as dithiopyr, isoxaben, pendimethalin or prodiamine in late summer or early fall before the weed seeds have germinated. Otherwise, in late autumn or in early spring, before rapid growth begins, a post-emergent herbicide will usually destroy them.

Perennial weeds are those that live more than two years and return each growing season from the rootstock. Sadly, perennial weeds if allowed to mature, produce seeds. Like annuals, these seeds have the potential to grow into new perennial weeds. Dandelion, white clover, wild violet, ground ivy, plantain, and bindweed are examples of broadleaf perennial weeds. During September and



Dandelion

through the month of October



Ground Ivy

is the best time to declare chemical warfare on these pests. In late summer, perennial weeds are preparing for dormancy. Their metabolic energies are being directed to their roots. A post-emergent herbicide such as 2,4-D, MCPP, Dicamba or MCPA should be applied. The systemic toxins within these herbicides translocate to the roots of the weeds causing certain death to the plants during the winter months. A formulation with at least three of the previously listed ingredients provides the best control.

If weeds persist and are everywhere in your yard, like mine, I urge you to declare war now. Come spring, you will be glad you did. Today, my war on weeds begins.