

FALL IS A GOOD TIME FOR WEED CONTROL IN YOUR LAWN, ON YOUR FARMSTEAD AND IN YOUR PASTURES



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With the all the rain received this fall, weeds are flourishing and several biennials and winter annuals have germinated as well in lawns, non-crop areas and pastures. Hopefully we will get a break in the weather in the next few weeks and you will be able to treat these weeds. If you have troublesome perennial or biennial weeds in your lawn, in non-crop areas around your farm or in your pastures, fall is a good time for control. In lawns, now is an excellent time to eliminate perennials, such as dandelions, plantain, clover, and ground ivy. This time of year perennial weeds are transporting carbohydrates and energy to the crowns and roots for storage over the winter. Herbicides applied to weeds now should be transported down to the roots where it will act to kill those roots. In the fall, weeds have less wax on the surface so absorption is greater into the plant. Even if weeds survive an application of herbicide in the fall, they are often weakened and killed by the cold temperatures of winter. The application of growth regulator herbicides, most of which are 2, 4-D based, will do an excellent job this time of year in reducing lawn weeds. Most herbicides used around the yard for broadleaf weeds will contain both 2,4-D and Banvel (dicamba). Some of several commercial herbicides used for broadleaf weed control include: 2, 4-D, Banvel, Weed-Be-Gon, Trimec Plus, and Trimec Classic. These are just a few of the well know herbicides, but there are many more that contain 2,4-D and/or dicamba and will do the job as well. Wait for a warm, sunny day with little or no wind to spray if possible.

A very difficult weed to kill is field bindweed. Bindweed should be treated when the plant has vigorous fall growth. The application of one quart of 2, 4-D or one quart of 2, 4-D and ½ pint of Banvel per acre is recommended. This won't kill all the bindweed out, but it will reduce your infestation. You should plan on treating the bindweed for several years before you completely eliminate it. You can also spot treat areas with Roundup (glyphosate) this time of year, but it will kill your grass as well.

For winter annuals or biennials, an application in the rosette stage of growth is recommended. It is much easier to control these weeds in the rosette stage than in the spring after they bolt. Herbicides should be applied after rains to actively growing weeds for best control. Some of the weeds that fall into this category include field pennycress, common mullein, bull thistle, musk thistle and poison hemlock. Good control of musk thistle can be obtained in October and November. Ideally herbicide should be applied close to a hard frost. Research in Iowa indicated effective control was achieved using 2,4-D with applications made after several nights when temperatures fell below 32 degrees. With the leaves of musk thistle close to the soil surface, the plant is protected from freezing temperatures. Daytime temperatures in the 50's are satisfactory for control. The addition of Banvel to 2,4-D provides better weed control as temperatures get colder. If it gets really cold before you get a chance to spray and thistles may be dormant, use Tordon 22K because it has residual activity up until next spring.

The use of herbicides without good cultural practices will usually give poor weed control. Be sure to read and follow label directions when using herbicides in your lawn or non-cropland. If you have other questions on weed control, contact me at the University of Nebraska Extension office in the lower level of the courthouse at 1824 N in Auburn (402) 274-4755.

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