With the rains we have received in recent weeks, a number of weeds have either
greened up or new weeds have germinated and are now growing in your lawns and
landscapes, around your farmstead or in your fields. I emphasized this previously this
fall, but with the rain, I see that several weeds have really taken off and are growing well.
It is not too late to control many of these weeds. 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-Gone, Trimec Plus, and Trimec Classic.

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. 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 and musk thistle. 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.

Gary Lesoing
Extension Educator
Nemaha County
November 2012