

Lawn Irrigation Workshop and Weed Control

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A few weeks ago I wrote an article about efficient turf irrigation and irrigation audits on automatic systems. The goal is water conservation and a healthier lawn.

To further cover this topic and see a hands on demonstration of an audit, a workshop will be held on June 21 at 6:30 PM. This will be held at the home of Tony and Kathie Kresha, 36 Clear Lake, Columbus NE.

Along with demonstrating how to do an irrigation audit to learn how much water your system applies and how uniformly, a variety of topics will be covered, questions answered, and Extension Master Gardeners will share their experience using soil moisture meters to determine when to water.

Topics to be discussed include turfgrass water needs, determining when irrigation is needed, and effects of soil compaction, aeration, fertilization and more. If you have a lawn weed, disease or insect question, you can bring a sample in a plastic bag for identification and management information.

We are calling this program Water Dogs and it is open to the public. While registration is not required and there is no fee, please email kfeehan2@unl.edu or call 402-563-4901 for questions. If you let us know you're attending, we can contact you in case of cancellation due to weather.

Along with watering, weed control is a current lawn issue. Now is the time for yellow nutsedge control if using herbicides or hand-pulling. While we may not be able to see much sedge yet, its starting growth and control before June 21 is important.

Yellow nutsedge is the yellow grass-like plant with waxy blades that grows taller than Kentucky bluegrass. Larger plants are most noticeable after June, but this perennial sedge begins to emerge from underground tubers in late May.

While smaller plants are more difficult to see amongst turfgrass now, from the first week of June up to June 21 is considered prime time for control. Smaller plants are easier to kill and nutsedge is killed before plants develop numerous underground tubers.

To help reduce nutsedge, mow tall at 3.5 inches and avoid overwatering. Hand-pulling can be effective if there are very few plants and if pulled early. If herbicides are used, products containing sulfentrazone, known as Dismiss; halosulfuron or Sedge-Hammer; and mesotrione such as Tenacity are labeled for postemergence control in cool-season turfgrasses. Be sure to follow all label directions.

Control of broadleaf weeds, like dandelions and clover, during summer is not as effective and there is increased risk of injury to non-target plants. Larger weeds are also more difficult to control.

Herbicide control is less effective and turf safety decreases when weeds are treated under low soil moisture. Air temperatures higher than 85 degrees Fahrenheit increase the chance of turf injury as well as herbicide volatilization which leads to drifting onto nontarget plants.

When treated in spring or summer, perennial broadleaf weeds often regrow from roots with summer watering and fertilization. September and October are the best months to control perennial broadleaf weeds with herbicides.

If weed control is needed during summer, hand dig dandelions to prevent blooming and seed production. Or spot treat individual weeds with herbicide when environmental conditions are cooler and not windy. The label will list conditions under which products should not be applied.