

## Read the Label

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Pesticides are products that kill pests. A pesticide that kills insects is an insecticide. One that controls diseases is often a fungicide. Those that kill weeds are herbicides and so on.

When pesticide use is justified, it is important to select the right product and read the label for safe and effective application. Roundup herbicides are one example that emphasize label importance.

Roundup is a brand name and not a chemical name. There are a number of Roundup products with different active ingredients. An active ingredient is the actual chemical that controls the pest. It is listed on the front of the label.

Herbicides are also labeled as selective or nonselective. Selective products kill specific plants without affecting others such as products that kill dandelions in a lawn but do not kill turfgrass.

A nonselective product usually kills any plant it is applied to. If a nonselective herbicide is used on dandelions in a lawn, the turfgrass will also be killed. If the active ingredient is a selective chemical that kills grasses but not broadleaf weeds, turfgrass could be damaged by such products.

With Roundup, most buyers are aware of the nonselective products containing glyphosate. Roundup Weed and Grass Killer is most common. There are about eight other Roundup products that contain glyphosate as well as other active ingredients. All are nonselective.

Roundup for Lawns came on the market some years ago. This product does not contain glyphosate. The active ingredients are selective herbicides and include MCPA, quinclorac, dicamba and sulfentrazone. When applied correctly, Roundup for Lawns controls a number of weeds without harming turfgrass.

A new Roundup product called Crabgrass Destroyer was recently introduced. The active ingredient is topramezone and is a selective herbicide. This is an option for homeowners to manage some grassy weeds like crabgrass, goosegrass, foxtail and others in most types of turfgrass without killing the lawn.

These three Roundup products emphasize the importance of reading pesticide labels to know what the active ingredient is, what weeds the herbicide will control, and what sites the product can be applied to.

Integrated pest management is taught by Extension. With this approach, pesticides are considered a last option and only one management tool. For lawn weeds, maintaining a dense turf and using a mowing height of three to three and one-half inches all season is an example of cultural management.

Hand-digging weeds before they bloom and produce seed is a mechanical tool. Applying herbicides to blooming weeds rarely stops seed production. Only removing and destroying the weed or the blossoms will prevent seeding. Postemergence herbicides are best applied to young weeds.

It is necessary to identify weeds, especially if using herbicides. Distinguishing between broadleaf and grassy weeds is easy. But is the weed an annual or perennial? If an annual, is it a summer or a winter annual? Depending on the answer, different types of herbicides need to be used and applied at different times in a weed's life cycle.

For weed control, positively identify weeds and learn the best time to control. September and October are key times for broadleaf weed control in lawns. If pesticides are chosen as a control method, read the label before purchasing and applying.