

Late season crabgrass control

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. Late July is often the time of year when people are suddenly becoming aware that they have crabgrass, or one of the other warm season annual grasses that invade our lawns. In some cases the grasses may have been there for quite some time and they are just now realizing it. In other cases the crabgrass control that homeowners applied back in March has broken down and irrigation or rainfall has now brought on a wave of new seedlings that will haunt us into September. Sadly, some homeowners won't know that they have a problem until crabgrass starts to go pale green and then yellow as we head towards that frost. If you know that you have crabgrass or foxtail or any of those summer time annual grasses, there are herbicides that can help you get them under control. There are two products with somewhat different considerations for use. The first products contain the active ingredient quinclorac. This product is found in Ortho's Weed-B-Gon Plus Crabgrass Control. Quinclorac is going to be most active on smaller crabgrass, generally less than four inches tall. The Ortho product also controls dandelions and other broad leaf weeds. Be careful around sensitive plants. The second product is Bayer Advanced's Crabgrass control for lawns with the active ingredient of fenoxaprop-p-ethyl. This product does not control dandelions, BUT it will control even large crabgrass as well as sandburs and other warm season annual grasses. This is only available with a built in hose end sprayer but it is very effective. With these and all products remember to read and follow all label directions. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Tree Seedlings in Lawns

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. One thing that I know I deal with in my own lawn is tree seedlings. At any given time of the summer I can walk through my yard and see at least a half dozen species of tree seedlings growing. The real problem here is that just mowing them off doesn't kill them, they just sprout new leaves and the root system gets even bigger. Weed control products that we apply in the fall don't do any good because the leaves are often gone off of these little seedlings. So that leaves us the spring and summer to try to get these little rascals under control. Keeping a lawn mowed tall and keeping it thick will help reduce how many of these you have, but if you have very many trees you will wind up with shady spots with thin turf where the seedlings will pop up. Unfortunately, while the Weed-b-gon dandelion killer type herbicides may get some of the tree seedlings, they often won't get all of them. Some of those little seedlings are tough. I'll also guarantee you that one treatment won't get them all. This is something you'll be fighting year in and year out. I would recommend getting one of the poison ivy killer products or stump and brush killers, something that has the active ingredient triclopyr. I would also encourage you to spot spray the individual trees, don't try to treat the entire lawn. Yes it will take you longer but you'll get better results and less damage. All of these products have vapors that will come off at treatment that can cause damage to desirable plants. Use on calm days and when temperatures are below 85 degrees, preferably below 80. And be persistent. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Soil Insects in Gardens

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. It's gotten to the point that when it comes to lawn and garden problems, I don't see too many new things come across my desk. A few weeks ago, I did have a new one. A local gardener brought in potatoes that were infested with termites. I've seen ants in potatoes, I've seen grubs and wireworms in potatoes, but never termites. Termites eat cellulose and potatoes don't really have much cellulose in them. All I can figure out is that there was a termite colony close to where the potatoes were planted and since it had been so dry during June, the termites were using the potatoes as a water source. It's the only explanation I can come up with. Naturally, there's nothing that can be done for this growing season, but this exemplifies the challenge of dealing with soil insects that may get into our garden produce, especially stuff that produces below ground. Wireworms, grubs and ants, as well as a handful of other soil living organisms do cause risk for our gardens. If you have had problems with these, the time to deal with them is late this summer or early fall. There are products, usually granular, that you can apply to the garden and till in or apply to the surface and water in. For control of insects in root crops this really needs to be done this fall when you are not in production of garden produce. You need to apply it so it can work and then dissipate before planting next spring. Probably the best results are going to be from tilling the garden this fall, which helps break up some insect egg cases, then applying the pesticide granules and then watering it in right away. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Tomato Hornworms

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. I think it's safe to say that the majority of my gardening questions surround tomatoes with squash coming in at second place. This time of year we've made it through tomatoes blooming but not setting on, blossom end rot and already dealing with septoria leaf spot. So many gardeners think that they are home free only to come out one morning to find numerous leaves just GONE. Often, around on the ground or on leaves below the missing leaves, you'll find little black pellets that should offer a clue. This pest is the tomato hornworm. This larval form of a sphinx moth starts off small with a small appetite. But a full grown tomato hornworm can be bigger than your middle finger and has an appetite to match. These big ugly caterpillars prefer to feed at night and then disappear into the foliage during the day. Just one nearly full grown hornworm can eat a lot of leaves over the course of an evening. While you can spray for these pests, let me suggest a better approach. Since you rarely have more than one or two hornworms, just patiently start looking for them. They like to spend days deep within the plant, usually right along a large stem with they tend to just blend in. Now, you wouldn't think that a caterpillar three to four inches long and as big around as your finger could hide, but they will. Once you find one you have two choices - you can pull them off and drop them in a bucket of water where they will drown. I don't like to make them suffer though, so I pull them off and slam them to the ground where they kind of explode. Problem solved! This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.

Bermudagrass Control

This is Gardening with Chuck on 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County, K-State Research and Extension Ag & Natural Resources Agent. A couple of weeks ago I was talking about killing Bermudagrass if you are planning to do some reseeding. This is something that you need to be doing when the bermudagrass is growing well and requires the use of products like glyphosate, aka Roundup which is going to kill everything. It also requires that you treat, wait two weeks, water the lawn, mow it short, and spray again. While two treatments two weeks apart CAN get all of the Bermuda, I'd be inclined to plan three treatments just to make sure. Bermudagrass is very resilient and hard to get rid of. And as I've said before, if your neighbors have Bermuda in their lawns, you trying to get rid of it in your lawn may be like trying to carry water in a bucket with a hole in it! If you are dealing with just a small amount of bermudagrass however or trying to keep it at bay at the edges of your lawn, there is a product that may help. It isn't really a product to use in place of roundup for renovation, but it can help slow Bermudagrass down. The herbicide is currently only in one homeowner package from Bayer Advanced and is appropriately called, Bermudagrass Control for Lawns. It will not harm fescue, bluegrass or ryegrass lawns. It should not be used on zoysia or buffalograss lawns. The active ingredient is fenoxaprop-p-ethyl and is the same exact product that Bayer uses in their Crabgrass Killer for Lawns. When used for bermudagrass suppression you should plan to spray once a month starting when the bermuda greens up and on through when it goes dormant. Complete control may take two years but it is an option. This has been Gardening with Chuck on the Talk of JC, 1420 KJCK, I'm Chuck Otte.