

DEALING WITH CRABGRASS IN THE FIELD

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Most of us here feel a sense of pride in a job well done. This is probably the reason why I feel bad when customers call to complain about problems with our applications.

I am thankful that Acclaim has been able to bail me out of my crabgrass complaint calls the last few seasons. Crabgrass break through has always been a problem to a certain extent. In the past attempts to treat this problem once the crabgrass was up were both difficult and risky. Total kills in one application using the arsonates are also impossible to predict, so a second application of post-emergent crabgrass control was usually scheduled. This took a lot of time and costs a lot of money.

I found it even more difficult to try to explain to an unhappy customer that crabgrass controls even working at 99% can allow up to 100 plants to grow. Today we can arm our trucks with a hand can or back pack sprayer and Acclaim and give the applicators the go ahead to shoot to kill crabgrass on sight. By spot treating the crabgrass during regularly scheduled treatments we have been able to reduce special service calls and increase customer satisfaction by taking care of a problem before it becomes a problem.

For the last two years we have been carrying Acclaim on our trucks starting as early as late May. During late May and throughout June, we apply pre-emergent crabgrass control with our Acclaim because it has been suggested that reapplying the pre-emergent with Acclaim will reestablish a crabgrass barrier in the area of break through. My feeling is that we had less regrowth of crabgrass last year than in the year prior. Studies have also shown that it is important to maintain high pressure with a t-jet nozzle when you spray. I have found that it is easier to use a back pack sprayer in most situations.

But enough about the areas that do not work. As a general rule, once our pre-emergent treatment is watered in it does a good job of controlling crabgrass. Over the years we have used most of the pre-emergent crabgrass controls. I have been satisfied with Balan, Team and Dacthal. Tender Lawn Care's general program during the last few years has been to apply a fertilizer/Team combination product until the third week of April. At this time we switched to a liquid fertilizer, Dacthal and weed control combination. I think it is important to instruct the consumer to water in the treatment for best results, even though you will catch some flack because their sprinkler systems have not been activated yet. Watering in the treatment will insure that the pre-emergent barrier is set early in the season and therefore insure maximum control.

Because crabgrass is the most difficult to control in the areas that have thinned out during the previous season, I see a great benefit in providing the thin areas with extra fertilizer in the fall. Additional fertilizer in the fall will increase the rooting and tillering to encourage thinning areas to fill in and naturally resist crabgrass.

Finally, I would like to share a war story with you about a sales call I made last season. While I worked with this woman I was plagued with many ecological questions about the safety of our applications. As I presented her with our program a scowl came over her face, then she asked me what my prices would be without crabgrass control and weed control. Then she informed me that she controlled her weeds and crabgrass without pesticides. My interest was tickled so I asked her to explain. She said she used a rock to kill her weeds and crabgrass. Immediately I thought of some wonderful natural mineral that had herbicidal effects on both crabgrass and broadleaf weeds. To my dismay I found out that her control was simply a 3 inch landscape rock that is placed on the young plants for a couple of weeks or until they are dead. Can you imagine how unique your company would be using this method. You could roll up to your accounts with a yard of rock and spread it over the lawn.