



Goosegrass

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Goosegrass (*Elusine indica*) can be found throughout the United States with the exception of the mountainous regions and northern plains. Persisting on compacted soils, it is most often visible of areas on heavy traffic, such as along foot paths, and golf cart trails. Due to it's prostrate growth habit, goosegrass will tolerate closely mowed putting green heights, and can be most difficult of control under these low mowing conditions.

An annual grass reproduced by seeds, a single mature plant can product between 20,000 to 50,000 seeds on 3 to 7 fingerlike racemes per spike. Seeds germinate when daily average soil temperatures at or near the surface are 65 to 67 degrees F. This means that goosegrass can germinate throughout the summer growing season, and starts in February in Florida. In South Florida, goosegrass often acts like a perennial, and is present year round.

Long seasonal growth means that herbicide control of goosegrass needs critical timing, for best results. Pre-emergence herbicide controls used at present need either a long residual during a single application, or two safely applied applications between early and late spring. Some herbicides used at present for goosegrass control are benefin (Balan), oxidiazon (Ronstar), or a combination of oxidiazon plus bensulide (Betasan).

Post emergence control of goosegrass with MSMA plus metribuzin (Sencor) or Asulam (Asulox) is usually applied in late spring/early summer. Often mature plants are difficult to control and have to be spot treated by hand with a non-selective herbicide such as glyphosate (Roundup). Because goosegrass has a fibrous root system, one control often used is to cut out the crown of the plant with a sharp tool. New herbicides are being evaluated constantly for safer, more selective control. ■