



Going Generic?

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For a variety of reasons, primarily economic, turfgrass managers often choose to use generic products including fungicides, herbicides and insecticides. So, is it a good or bad decision to use generic products? The bottom line is that there is no real definitive answer! One thing that is certain, the active ingredient in generic products is the same as those in branded products. However, many times the chemical formulation (i.e., inert ingredients including the carrier, surfactant, adjuvant, etc.) are not necessarily the same or comparable as the branded, non-generic, product. This is where the performance of a respective generic product can be impacted or compromised. This is not to imply that generic products are not effective, but merely to make you aware there can be differences between branded (i.e., original manufacturer and generic products) and generic products.

Agricultural chemical companies that discover, develop, register and market turf and ornamental products put hundreds of thousands of dollars into a single product long before it makes it to the commercial marketplace (i.e., for sale to you). Often early in the developmental process, companies work with university researchers to evaluate respective products. This important interaction allows university researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the pros and cons of respective turf and ornamental products. Consequently, appropriate recommendations such as application timing, rate(s), pest or pest complex, spray volume, etc. can be made to growers.

As for generic products, seldom do manufacturers or formulators of generic products work with or rely on university researchers to comprehensively evaluate their products. They typically rely on data and information generated and provided by the original manufacturer of the branded product that contains the respective active ingredient. Again, the specific formulations of generic products are not necessarily the same as branded products. To this end, testing and evaluation of generic products is equally necessary to understand the pros and cons of generic products similarly to branded products. As you might suspect, such efforts require additional costs, thus often driving up the cost of generic products.

One simple way to ward-off or circumvent any potential issues regarding the performance of a generic product is to request to see performance (i.e., efficacy)

data or information of the generic product. It may be that such data or information exists and that the product being considered is equally as effective as its comparable branded product. Or, it may be also possible that no data exists. In this case, unless you have previous experience with or other information from someone whom you have confidence in who has used the product and had success, make an informed product selection carefully and wisely. 🌱

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