

Ask the Expert: Common Questions on Weed Control



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Question. I've heard a lot of talk from sales people on a new herbicide called halosulfuron (Manage®). Can you tell me about this product and what it is supposed to do? *South Carolina.*

Answer. Manage® is a new herbicide recently released by the Monsanto Chemical Company. It is targeted specifically for nutsedges with some broadleaf weed activity. Unlike some older products, Manage® appears to have good activity on most nutsedges (including yellow and purple nutsedge). It also has good to excellent turf safety for all warm-season grasses. Manage® belongs to the sulfonylurea herbicide family, meaning it is used at extremely low rates, generally needs a repeat application three to six weeks after the initial application for complete control, and is somewhat slow to develop control symptoms (typically, 10 to 21 days). As with any new material, price and availability must be considered before using this or any product.

Question. The past two years have seen an enormous increase in weeds such as dayflower, doveweed, and certain nutsedges. Can you speculate on why this has occurred and what are our control options? *Alabama.*

Answer. Several factors have contributed to the severe increase in the populations of the weeds you speak of. One involves the general reduction in use of older herbicides such as MSMA, DSMA, and the phenoxy herbicides (such as 2, 4-D and dicamba), which help keep these weeds in check. However, with the release of newer herbicides, such as Illoxan® and Confront®, these older herbicides are used less; thus, these weeds have proliferated. Secondly, we have had two consecutively wet summers, which have favored the growth and development of these weeds. These weeds generally do not like dryer areas. They are, consequently, likely to subside somewhat when we experience periods of less rainfall. Control in bermudagrass is by several means: one is with repeat applications of MSMA, DSMA, or the phenoxy herbicides every seven days until control is achieved. Secondly, MSMA plus Sencor® will provide quick burndown, but may also result in some short term turf phytotoxicity. Preemergence control is provided with a mixture of Gallery® and one of the grass herbicides, such as pendimethalin, Surflan®, Barricade®, Dimension®, or Ronstar®. These should be applied in early spring and repeated in 90 days for season-long control.

Question. Dollarweed continues to be our worst weed problem in home lawns. What are your latest thoughts on controlling it? *Florida.*

Answer. Dollarweed (also called pennywort) generally prefers wet, poorly drained areas. Obviously, the first line of defense is to monitor soil moisture by regulating the irrigation schedule and provide soil drainage, if possible. Herbicides can provide control, but timing is everything. My experience indicates that fall is the best time of year to control this weed with least turfgrass problems. Herbicides containing atrazine, simazine, Image®, Prompt®, or the phenoxy herbicides can be applied in October and repeated three to four weeks later. This follow-up application is very important to providing complete control. Read the herbicide label carefully for your intended turfgrass, as some tolerance differences exist between turf species to these materials.