

“Monthly Field Tip”

Know Your Target

Environmentally Sensitive Pest Control by Jim Hermann

The NJ Pesticide Applicator Training Manual defines a pesticide as “a chemical or other agent that will destroy a pest or protect something from a pest.” The Applicator Training Manual defines a pest as “an unwanted organism (animal, plant, bacteria, fungi, virus, etc.)” This is what a pest is. A surface-feeding pest is not the center fielder for the local t-ball team that single handedly keeps the outfield void of dandelions. An opportunistic pest is not the men’s softball team that played without a permit just because the field was not occupied. Some pests like cool wet weather. They are not the girls’ lacrosse team. Others can devastate a stand of grass in a few hours. They are not the varsity football team.

If you apply pesticides to the athletic fields and/or grounds you are employed to maintain, you are required to be a certified commercial pesticide applicator, or be working under the direct supervision of a certified commercial pesticide applicator. It has been said, “It’s only Roundup, I don’t have to be licensed.” IF IT’S A PESTICIDE, YOU HAVE TO BE LICENSED.

When applying pesticides follow label instructions, know and understand your “**Target.**” (The area, buildings, plants animals, or pests *intended* to be treated with a pesticide application). Be aware of and be concerned with any potential “**Non-target**”: (Any plant, animal or other

organism that a pesticide application is not aimed at, but may accidentally be injured by a chemical)

Before making any pesticide applications do three things:

1. Identify

Know your target. Understand its life cycle and growth habits to determine when is the best time to treat and what is the most effective method of treatment while causing the least amount of environmental impact.

2. Quantify

Thoroughly inspect the area you contemplate treating of to determine if existing pest populations warrant treatment. Remember, no pesticide is 100% effective. There have always been and always will be pests in the environment. A part of your job as a responsible turf manager is to determine acceptable levels or thresholds of population density below which chemical controls are not necessary.

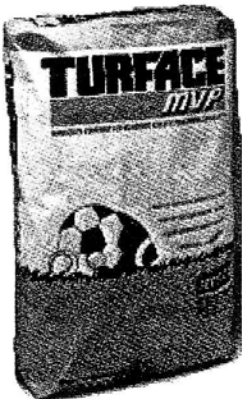
3. Justify

Weigh all the factors. Do ten dandelions justify a blanket application of herbicide? Does a lawn moth spotted in the evening justify an insect control application? ▲

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