

Turfgrass Photo Pointers

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Problems caused by the misuse of turf chemicals and what to do about them



Fuel Oil Damage

Turfgrasses around fuel oil intakes on lawns are often subjected to this type of damage. When fuel oil is spilled on turf, it kills the plant. If enough is spilled to soak into the soil, it renders the soil useless for plant growth. The fuel oil cannot be leached out of the soil, and will remain in it for extremely long periods.

The only solution is to dig the soil out and replace it with new soil. Depth of the soil removed should be well below the layer that is saturated. If this is not done, grass plants in the new soil may germinate and grow but may die later on when the roots reach the fuel-oil-saturated soil below.

Loose stone, sand, or any porous material can be used around the intake pipe to catch drippings from the delivery hose. A circle 8 to 12 inches in diameter is sufficient.

If the problem occurs again, the best solution would be to change fuel oil dealers!

Weed Killer Damage

Although all good weed control chemicals carry detailed instructions regarding rates of application, etc., it still requires the ultimate user to use good judgment and common sense regarding how and when they are applied.

In this case (and one that occurs quite often) the material was carefully applied on the road shoulder between the road and the lawn. It was heavily infested with weeds. Unfortunately, a heavy downpour immediately following application of the chemical washed the materials down into the turf. As advertised the chemical did a good job of eradication on the weeds—and the lawn.



(Two more photo pointers on page 20)

Fertilizer Burn

Some fertilizers will severely burn turf under certain conditions. Nitrogenous fertilizer materials can be classified into three groups. They include:

- Inorganic chemical compounds
- Natural organics
- Ureaform compounds

Natural organics and ureaform compounds are relatively safe and do not burn the turf. The Inorganic compounds commonly called chemical fertilizer contain ammonium sulphate and ammonium nitrate, or synthetics such as urea and cyanamid. These materials are highly water soluble and convert quickly into ammonia and nitrates. When any of these materials are applied to turf, they will cause severe burning, unless watered in promptly.



Poor Weed Control Application

This photo shows what can happen when an inexperienced operator applies weed control chemicals. The dark strips are where the operator missed. Accuracy of application is extremely important. The best and most expensive spray equipment is worthless without a trained operator. Calibrations, pressures, width of boom, and speed of travel are all inter-related. Training the operator is as important as selecting the chemical.

Only when all these factors are considered, can one be assured of a good weed control program.

Over \$75 million is spent annually on chemicals for turfgrass maintenance.

Keep up to date on how to use them properly. Follow label instructions, attend regional conferences, and read *Weeds Trees and Turf*.