

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

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Q: Has there been much progress lately in improvement of grass growth regulators (to save mowings)?

A: A number of growth retardants have been researched for turf, and a few such as maleic hydrazide (Maintain 3, MH-30, Slo-Gro, Retard and chlorflurenol [Maintain CF-125]) are available commercially.

Unfortunately, growth retardants are expensive and the results unpredictable. The response from retardant applications is influenced by temperature; rainfall; time, rate and uniformity of application; and turfgrass species and vigor. Most of the chemicals cause yellowing of the grass blades and reduced tillering and rooting, which can have a long-term effect on turf health and density.

The use of growth retardants currently labeled for turfgrass should be limited to low-maintenance, hard-to-mow areas such as median strips and road banks.

Q: At what temperature in the spring would 2,4-D, Dacthal W-75, Endothal, Paraquat have any effect on sprayed weeds?

A: For broadleaf weed control, 2,4-D is effective above freezing, but maximum effectiveness requires actively-growing weeds which occur above 50° F.

Dacthal W-75 is a pre-emergent herbicide that controls germinating seedlings. The temperature at which seeds germinate is dependent upon the species, but if you are primarily concerned with crabgrass, the temperature is about 55° F.

You don't mention the intended use of Endothal, but if it is for aquatic weed control, the weeds should be actively growing, which occurs above 60° F.

Control with paraquat is not temperature-dependent but is affected by the amount of light.

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