

# VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

By Roger Funk, Ph.D., Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio

**Q:** What herbicide(s) can we use to remove crabgrass from bentgrass greens which will not injure the bentgrass? (Tennessee)

**A:** Pre-emergence herbicides such as Betasan can be used, but repeated use may reduce stress tolerance and increase disease incidence. Postemergence herbicides such as DSMA have also been used, but the potential for injury is high, particularly at high temperatures.

Perhaps the best solution is to remove the crabgrass by hand and improve the growing conditions to favor bentgrass growth.

**Q:** At what height should bermudagrass be mowed on a football field, and when should it be cored? (South Carolina)

**A:** Hybrid bermudagrass is mowed at one-half inch; common bermudagrass, at one inch. Core cultivation should be done after bermudagrass begins growth in the spring.

**Q:** When is the best time to control oxalis?

**A:** Any broadleaf weed can be controlled best when the weed is actively growing.

**Q:** Is it possible for a tree to be injured by lightning and not have any external symptoms such as strips of bark burned or peeled off?

**A:** Yes, internal tissues in the trunk and roots may be severely burned without external evidence. Symptoms of injury may not become apparent until several months after the tree is struck by lightning.

**Q:** What precautions should be taken when using oil sprays? We burned some trees last year.

**A:** Summer oils should have 85% of the unsaturated hydrocarbons removed; dormant oils, 65% to 75% of the unsaturated hydrocarbons removed.

Dormant oils should not be applied if the temperature is below 40°F. or will approach freezing soon after application. Some evergreens may show injury symptoms if freezing temperatures occur within three weeks following application. Dormant oils applied after October 1 may increase cold damage to some trees.

Summer oil may also cause injury if applied when the temperature is 90°F. or greater and should not be applied during hot, dry weather or when plants are stressed.

Oil sprays should not be used on sugar maples, hemlock, larch, cryptomeria, Japanese maples, beech, hickory, walnut, butternut, mountainash, redbud, coco palms and maidenhair ferns. Oil may injure Douglas fir flower beds and remove the blue color from blue spruce.

**Q:** Can nematicides be applied by home owners or do they have to be applied by certified applicators? (Florida)

**A:** Sarolex can be applied by home owners, but it will probably not give satisfactory control of lance and stubby root nematodes which can cause serious injury to turfgrasses.

**Q:** How can we best maintain turf within student pathways that cut across campus? (New York)

**A:** Students have a way of finding the most direct route between two points, which architects should consider when they include sidewalks in the design. Possibly the best solution would be to pave the paths. If this is not practical in your situation, shrubbery and certain ground covers can help direct foot traffic and confine it to existing walkways.

The primary problem with foot paths is compaction, which leads to turf thinning and potential erosion on slopes. Periodic aerification will help the turfgrass develop a deeper root system and increase resistance to wear. Higher mowing heights and high potassium levels also reportedly increase wear tolerance.

**Q:** What herbicides will control the weeds that were controlled with Silvex?

Are there other herbicides available to replace 2,4-D if it is removed from the market? (New York)

**A:** Dichlorprop (2,4-DP) in combination with 2,4-D will control many of the same weeds controlled by Silvex. Spurge can be controlled with DCPA and bromoxynil.

As an alternative to 2,4-D, MCPA is reportedly a viable substitute as are a few experimental compounds. However, I do not feel we should allow the 2,4-D turf registration to be cancelled without giving it a fair trial; I have yet to see any scientific data that supports the claims being made against it. Support the Professional Lawn Care Association of America's campaign to save 2,4-D. Their address is 435 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1717, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

**Q:** Where can I obtain a compound called Anhydrite? It is used as a soil amendment.

**A:** Check with supplier of gypsum. Anhydrite is anhydrous calcium sulfate.

**Send your questions or comments to: Vegetation Management c/o WEEDS TREES & TURF, 757 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Leave at least two months for Roger Funk's response in this column.**