

PROBLEM MANAGEMENT

by Balakrishna Rao, Ph.D.

Controlling crabgrass

Problem: We are thinking of seeding a number of our client's lawns in spring. We are going to use tall fescue grass and are concerned about crabgrass problems. Is it a good idea to use Tupersan to deal with crabgrass? (Ohio)

Solution: If it is possible, wait and do the seeding in fall around Labor Day for best results. Success in spring seeding depends upon providing sufficient water during establishment. During the slow establishment period, both grassy and broadleaf weeds present a problem in many lawns. To deal with crabgrass problems, several options can be considered.

First, seed this season but do not attempt to control crabgrass. Instead, manage the problem next year. Another choice is to use Tupersan, a pre-emergence herbicide from Du Pont, at planting time. At least 1/2 inch of water must be provided by rainfall or irrigation within three days after treatment. Tupersan is reportedly safe on newly-seeded grass. It is expensive but it will do the job.

The third option is to use post-emergence herbicides, such as MSMA (Daconate 6), DSMA or Acclaim! after the turfgrass is well-established and actively growing. All of these work well when used on small crabgrass plants. Therefore, success with this approach depends upon proper timing and good coverage. Some of these can produce foliar discoloration. Read and follow label specifications for best results.

Pine beetles

Problem: During a severe storm, many pine trees were blown over in some of our clients' properties. Clients are concerned about pine beetle infestation. The question is how quickly will the fallen trees be infested by beetles? Will beetles move from the fallen trees to other nearby trees? How can we manage this problem? (North Carolina)

Solution: Among many beetles, Southern pine beetles are the most destructive insect in the Southern U.S., Mexico and Central America. These beetles can build up in number very quickly and can cause extensive damage. Depending upon the latitude and elevation there may be four to seven generations per year, with overlapping generations.

During their activity period, beetles can attack all pines. Stressed or weakened plants, like the storm-damaged trees, would be more susceptible to beetle infestation. Once the beetles attack a tree, they can build up in numbers very quickly within a month. They often attack other pines nearby.

The first sign of an infestation is discoloration of tree crowns. Needles become yellowish first and then in about one to two months they turn reddish brown. Generally, pines are killed in groups of a few to several plants. Look for beetle entry point as evidenced by pitch tubes—small yellowish white resin,

1/4 to 1/2 inch in diameter.

During very dry periods, there may not be any pitch tube. Instead, only reddish boring dust can be seen. In these areas, bark trace the trunk and look for S-shaped egg galleries on wood. Sometimes eggs, larvae or even adults can be found in these galleries. Affected trees should be removed. Beetle broods in these trees can be killed by felling the infested trees and spraying the bark with lindane. It is important to spray the bark surface thoroughly, turning infested trees to cover all surfaces. Where feasible, burning of infested tree bark also gives a good control. Infested areas should be re-examined periodically for any new infestation.

Cool season weed control

Problem: Can Surflan or Treflan be used for pre-emergence weed control in cool-season turfgrass? If so, what rates, and does anyone make a fertilizer/herbicide combination available to turfgrass managers for professional use? (Ohio)

Solution: Yes, Treflan is available in combination with Balan for pre-emergence annual grassy weed control on cool-season turfgrasses. This combination product is called "Team," manufactured by Elanco Company. Apply two to three pounds active ingredient per acre to manage annual grassy weeds. Team is a granular product. It is available in several fertilizer combinations from Lebanon Chemical Company. Read and follow label specifications for best results.



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Questions should be mailed to Problem Management, Landscape Management, 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, OH 44130. Please allow 2-3 months for an answer to appear in the magazine.