

# PROBLEM MANAGEMENT

## Preventing oak decay

**Problem:** We have a client who wants to use oak wood as corner support posts for a utility building. What can be used to treat the wood to prevent decay? Creosote? Borax? (North Carolina)

**Solution:** Treating the wood's surface with Creosote or Borax will last only a few years. Ideally, the wood needs to be pressure treated with a preservative.

Improperly treated wood can be attacked by insects and may affect the timber quality.

Contact the lumber companies nearby to see whether they would be interested in helping you treat the wood.

## Preventing sap sucker injury

**Problem:** What can we do to prevent injury from sap suckers on birch trees? (Michigan)



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

**Solution:** Sap suckers make feeding injury on many plants such as birch and wild cherries. These birds generally make small holes in search of insects and/or sap from the trees. I have seen a number of trees showing sap sucker feeding holes on trunks. In some cases, the whole trunk is covered with holes. However, there was no observable effect on the crown. Perhaps the problem may be

aesthetic rather than of economic importance.

If the problem is really objectionable, your best approach is to distract birds from feeding on trunks. Consider treating trees for any insects such as borers. Mechanical devices such as aluminum foil wrapping or tying a pie pan to the trunk may also help distract birds from attraction to susceptible trees.

Ropel, a chemical repellent, has label registration for bird problems. Test it on a very small area first. Read and follow label specifications for best results.

## Pre-emergence nutsedge control

**Problem:** Are there any pre-emergence herbicides available that are labeled for the control of nutsedge? (Ohio)

**Solution:** A correct answer to this question requires a few additional questions. Are you interested in managing nutsedge on turfgrass areas or in the landscape? Also, are you out to destroy yellow or purple nutsedge?

In your area, you're probably dealing with yellow nutsedge. For pre-emergence yellow nutsedge control in turfgrass there aren't too many choices. Pennant herbicide from Ciba-Geigy has a label

recommendation for this use.

For post-emergence control of yellow nutsedge in turfgrass areas, application of products such as Dacotane 6, Basagran or Image should provide adequate control. For better results apply the product when the plants are young.

For pre-emergence control of yellow nutsedge in the landscape area, application of herbicides such as Casoron, Dual, Pennant, Eptam and Lasso should provide adequate control.

I was unable to find any selective post-emergence herbicide for nutsedge control labelled for ornamental use.

Even with the application of these pre- and post-emergence types of herbicide, the nutsedge control may be variable. Some of this problem is related to underground bulbs produced from the parent plant which may not receive sufficient herbicide. As a result, new plants may emerge the following year. In this case, repeat treatments may be needed during the season. It may take several years of treatments to manage the problem. Read and follow label specifications for best results.

## Eliminating bermudagrass

**Problem:** We use fabric and Roundup to get rid of bermudagrass, and it still gives me fits. How do I get rid of it? (Kentucky)

**Solution:** From your statement, I believe you are using landscape fabric and Roundup to manage bermudagrass in landscape plantings. Reports indicate that landscape fabrics are not satisfactory in managing bermudagrass. You can expect some control of weeds. However, any weeds that emerge through the fabric need to be managed by other means.

One approach would be to use Roundup, like you are doing, to manage emerging bermudagrass. Since Roundup will kill only the emerged plants, any plants which develop from seeds or rhizomes in the future should be managed with repeat applications. Make sure that Roundup doesn't get on other nearby non-target desirable plants.

Another approach is to use a herbicide such as Post, which is labeled for use in managing bermudagrass. Different rates are recommended based on the stage of development of bermudagrass. Therefore, read and follow label specifications for better 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.