

ASK THE EXPERT

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Weeds in nurseries

Problem: We are a nursery outlet. Our yard composition is a blue stone base. We have a continual problem with annual and perennial weeds. Can you recommend a pre-emergence or post-emergence herbicide which can be used around retail nursery stock effectively? (New York)

Solution: Annual and perennial weeds can present a serious and unsightly problem in a nursery situation. These weeds should be mechanically removed where practical (this is time-consuming!) or be treated with labelled herbicides at the proper time. Refer to your Cornell University weed control/pesticide guide to learn more about your specific need.

Often, the type of nursery plants you grow and the type of weeds you will be dealing with dictate the choice of herbicide. Since nursery plants differ in their tolerance to various herbicides, be sure to determine this before using a herbicide.

The following information might be useful in your situation:

1) For pre-emergence weed management in nursery housing areas: use herbicides such as simazine (Princep) plus Pennant, or simazine plus Surflan.

2) For pre-emergence weed management in containers: you can use herbicides such as Treflan 5G (must be watered-in immediately after treatment), Devrinol 50WP, Pennant 7.8E, Ronstar 2G, Scott's Surflan AS.

3) For post-emergence weed control: depending on the problem, products such as Roundup, Basagran or diquat can be used.

For additional details on the type of weeds managed by different products and their relative ease of handling, efficacy and other pertinent information, refer to the Cornell recommendation book.

Read and follow label specifications for better weed management.

Weeds around trees

Problem: How are broadleaf weeds managed around newly-transplanted trees in the lawn area? We have lost trees in the past, which we believe is related to herbicide injury. (Ohio)

Solution: To manage broadleaf weeds, you can use post-emergence herbicides such as Trimec containing 2,4-D, MCPP and dicamba. You can also use Turflon II Amine if you prefer 2,4-D with trichlopyr. For 2,4-D-free products, you can use herbicides such as Encore or Confront. To manage future broadleaf weed problems, the pre-emergence herbicide Gallery can be used.

From your statement above, I understand that you have lost a number of trees after transplanting, which you have attributed to herbicide injury. Although this is possible, in my opinion it's more likely that the trees were lost due to transplant shock, poor recovery after transplanting, or insufficient post-planting care.

Plants should be planted at the same depth they were planted in the nursery, or slightly higher. Deep-planted plants suffer from suffocation due to lack of oxygen to the roots.

Some of the tree loss could be related to post-planting care. After planting, during the establishment period, the plants need

proper watering, mulching and fertilizing.

From our research and field experience using herbicides in the lawn, we have not observed injury when the products are properly applied. Instead, it is most likely related to the above factors. Make sure you have selected the proper plant for the proper site and follow good planting and cultural management methods to minimize tree mortality.

Managing adelgids

Problem: How are pine bark adelgids managed? (New York)

Solution: To manage pine bark adelgids, use a horticultural oil in spring as a dormant treatment. An application of insecticides such as malathion or Dursban can be used to manage crawlers when they are active, usually around mid-May.

These adelgid insects feed on new shoots at the base where needles attach to twigs. Two applications of an insecticide at one-month intervals should provide adequate protection. If new generations appear, continue the treatment as needed when crawlers and/or white cottony patches appear on pines.

Read and follow label specifications for better results.

A difficult-to-control weed

Problem: Every year, summer oxalis infestations present a serious problem in many lawns. We have used Killex in past years with poor results. Are there some effective chemicals to manage this problem? (Ontario, Canada)

Solution: Oxalis is considered one of the most difficult-to-control weeds. The Canadian Ministry of Agriculture and Food recommends repeated use of mixtures containing amine formulations of 2,4-D with mecoprop, dichloroprop and/or dicamba.

The Killex you mention is a mixture of this type. Unfortunately, reports indicate that Killex doesn't provide adequate control, and the ester formulations available in the United States may not be registered for use in Canada. The only choice you have is to mechanically remove the plants or use repeated applications of Killex, as needed.

Remember that these herbicides adversely affect the root systems of turfgrass also. Therefore, it is a good idea to spot-treat an area for specific oxalis problems rather than to treat the entire lawn.

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Mail questions to "Ask the Expert," LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear in the magazine.