

ASK THE EXPERT

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Weeds in junipers

Problem: We find a lot of grassy and broadleaf weeds in a number of our clients' juniper beds. What kind of herbicides can be used to control these? (Michigan)

Solution: It is very difficult to manage weeds already growing in a bed of junipers. For selective control of grassy weeds, consider using products such as Vantage, which can be applied over the plants.

If the juniper plants are not too close to each other, you could use Roundup, a non-selective post-emergence herbicide. However, it can injure non-target plants, so avoid any contact or drift. Where feasible, consider hand weeding. It may be time-consuming, but if the weeds are already growing out of the bed, there is not much choice for broadleaf control.

Reports indicate that careful application of products such as Basagran (Lescogran) or Princep can also help manage certain broadleaf weeds. Generally, Basagran is recommended for nutsedge management. If you are considering this option, do a trial application in a small area where weeds are actively growing.

Once the existing weeds are taken care of, consider using products such as Snapshot, a pre-emergence herbicide, for future grassy and broadleaf weed management.

Weed seeds can remain viable in soil for up to 20 years, according to some reports. Therefore, consider using products such as Snapshot where a past weed history exists. Also consider good cultural and sanitation practices to minimize weed activity.

Read and follow label directions for better results.

Strike back at *Poa annua*

Problem: The problem of annual bluegrass in sodded Kentucky bluegrass lawns was not severe in past years, but this year it is very bad. It produces light-colored clumpy grass with seedheads. Since the lawn density looked good, we changed our program to using a crabgrass pre-emergence herbicide on a spot treatment basis instead of broadcast applications. This problem appears to be more in the backyards in shady areas. How do we control it? (New York)

Solution: The pre-emergence herbicide program you have provided in the past for crabgrass control must have also helped manage annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*). Since you now use the pre-emergent on an as-needed basis in selected hot spots, my guess is that you're missing the annual bluegrass.

Reports indicate that an application of post-emergence herbicides such as Cutless or Prograss should help manage annual bluegrass weeds. Prograss can be used as a pre- or post-emergence herbicide, if applied in September. Depending on the weed population, two to three applications may be needed at 21- to 30-day intervals. Sometimes, the result of fall applications may not be seen until the next spring. According to a AgrEvo representative, Prograss will work even under snow cover. Therefore, they say to wait, and evaluate the situation following spring.

In addition to the herbicide management approach, also consider providing a good cultural program to help improve the health of desirable turfgrass. Annual bluegrass plants are very surface-rooted and heavy seed producers. As a result, they can spread rapidly and establish in areas with moist ground. Provide proper watering and mowing to help minimize the weed problem. Selectively thinning branches of trees or removing lower limbs to increase sunlight will also increase the vigor of Kentucky bluegrass, which is not very shade tolerant.

Landscape fabric and weeds

Problem: We have used landscape fabric mulch to prevent weeds from growing near roadside ornamental plantings in commercial properties. We thought this would prevent future weed problems. To our surprise, we found a lot of weeds in this area last year. Where did we go wrong? How do we get rid of the existing weeds and also prevent future weed problems? (Pennsylvania)

Solution: Landscape fabric mulch can help prevent weed problems to a certain degree. Generally, it will help manage weeds as they emerge. However, reports indicate that there were failures in managing weeds using this method. In some cases, weeds grew through the sheets. In other cases, the weed seeds blew from nearby places and landed on the mulch bed and germinated. Therefore, the practical use of this system needs further study.

If you need to control those weeds this year, please refer to the previous solution above.

Beware the leafcutter bee

Problem: What would cause pieces of leaves—possibly cotoneaster—to come out of a water faucet outside of a home? What can we do to prevent this? (Ohio)

Solution: From your description, it appears that the problem could be created by a small insect called the leafcutter bee. It is known to cut marginal portions of leaves and carry them inside the pipes, sometimes causing the pipes to become quite full.

These insects often feed on roses. If there are rose or cotoneaster plants nearby, check for possible marginal leaf notching. This problem is also quite often seen near alfalfa fields.

To prevent this problem in the future, use some sort of screen, cap or lid to prevent the leafcutters from entering the pipe.

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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.