

ASK THE EXPERT

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How to control purple nutsedge

Problem: Is there anything to control purple nutsedge? (Texas)

Solution: Your best approach would be to use Image. According to Lesco Co. representatives, Image plus MSMA along with a spreader/sticker provides better control of purple nutsedge than Image alone in your area. In this combination treatment, MSMA has been shown to reduce the phytotoxicity effect on desirable turfgrass from Image.

Image is slightly slow to respond to treatment. I suggest using a tank mix of one quart/acre of Image plus 2 lb. ai/acre of MSMA plus a spreader sticker. Do not use MSMA on St. Augustine turfgrass.

Make sure the turfgrass is not under moisture stress to reduce the possibility of phytotoxicity. Apply during the cooler part of the day, such as early morning or late evening, two to three days after mowing. Also, do not mow for another 48 hours after the treatment application. This would improve translocation and systemic movement of Image. Avoid watering for 24 hours after the application of treatment.

Generally, two applications of Image at 14-day intervals should be sufficient to help manage the purple nutsedge plants during the season. Often, these treatments may not be sufficient to manage the nutsedge problem the following year. Reports indicate that new nutsedge plants can emerge from the underground bulbs which are not killed the previous year. Depending upon the situation, you may find 50-to-70 percent of new nutsedge plants during the second year. Therefore, monitor the area and consider using Image treatment the following year as needed. If the problem reappears the third year, it may require further treatments. With this approach, the objective is to eliminate the new plants emerging from underground bulbs every year. Within two to three years of treatment, the problem should be eliminated satisfactorily. A new nutsedge material from Monsanto, Manage, is currently pending EPA registration at this time for most warm- and cool-season turfgrasses. Read and follow label specifications for better results.

Sod webworm/grub trouble

Problem: We are finding lots of sod webworms and grubs in lawns. We are thinking of using Sevin insecticide for managing both. Would this work? (Ohio)

Solution: Yes, you can use Sevin insecticide to manage both sod webworms and grubs. Sod webworm larvae hide in the silken cocoons during the daytime and come out at night and feed at the base of tillers. Generally, they do not cause serious problems since sod webworms do not kill crowns. With the onset of cool and moist weather, turfgrass normally recovers well. Recovery can be further supported with proper fertilization. Insecticide treatments can be provided as needed if the problem is severe.

With grub control, the situation is slightly different. If the grub population is not very big with onset of good weather and

lots of rain, the turf may recover and the damage symptoms may not be very apparent. However, if the grub population is high, their extensive feeding on roots can cause severe injury. Turfgrass may not recover in spite of good growing conditions. For this reason, grub activity should be detected early, preferably around late July to early August, and registered insecticides applied as needed.

There are a number of good products in the market, but since you are interested in using Sevin, I will limit my answer to that product. After applying the insecticide, post-application watering is very important. This practice would provide about 80 to 85 percent control of grubs when treating with Sevin. The key is to apply early and water it in.

Read and follow the label specifications for better results.

Persistent poison ivy

Problem: A 30,000 sq. ft. field I manage is inundated with poison ivy. Until I took over, the field was cut twice each year at about six inches. From May 15 through August 15, I cut the field at 3 inches with a rotary mower. The leaves are smaller, but the ivy persists. The field is in full sun.

(Massachusetts)

Solution: The problem with poison ivy is that it may be coming from a nearby wooded area. Poison ivy can spread primarily by vegetative viny stem growth, as well as from seeds. Once established, they can gradually keep spreading into larger and larger areas.

A perennial, poison ivy survives the winter and returns the next year. Its seeds remain viable in soil for several years. When conditions are favorable in spring, seeds can produce new plants.

Selective management in a turfgrass field is difficult, if not impossible. Growth regulator products such as trichlophyr or dicamba would be needed for selective control. Consider using herbicides such as Confront (at a high label rate), Turflon II amine (which contains trichlophyr and 2,4-D) or dicamba plus Weedone DPC combination.

Fall application may be advantageous. At that time, the sugar from the leaves moves down to the root system for storage. If the treatments are done before the leaves change colors and before defoliation, fall application may be good. Try in a small area to see how it would manage the problem. Another option is to treat the field in early spring when plants unfold. It may require at least two applications. Consider a third application as needed to help manage the problem.

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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.