

Top 10 Ornamental Weeds

David Letterman's top 10 list is popular, but this group of pesky landscape weeds has more staying power.

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If you focus on the 10 weeds that represent the major weed groups infesting our landscapes, you will have a good base of information on the subject. Each weed life cycle group, with the exception of biennial weeds, is represented by at least one member.

I have listed possible chemical control options for these weeds. While there are nonchemical methods for control, that is a topic for another article. You can integrate chemical and cultural control in an IPM program.

You will deal with more than the 10 weeds listed here, but remember that control strategies for other weeds in that group may be quite similar to those listed. For example, yellow foxtail is in the summer annual grass category, just like large crabgrass. Chemical control options are essentially identical for these two weeds. In other cases, control strategies may be different for closely related weed species. Herbicide recommendations differ for yellow nutsedge compared to purple nutsedge, although both are perennial sedges. Check herbicide labels

and other sources of information for control of weeds not listed in this article.

Summer annuals

Large crabgrass is a troublesome weed in many situations, including landscape beds. It begins to germinate in spring when soil temperatures have risen above 50° to 55°F. It can germinate throughout the spring and summer, making it difficult to achieve season-long control with a single herbicide application. Split applications of pre-emergence herbicides, spaced 2 to 3 months apart, are often used for long-term control.

The best way to control crabgrass is through pre-emergence herbicide application. Products available for pre-emergence crabgrass control include Pendulum, Surflan, Barricade, Treflan/Preen, Ronstar, Devrinol and Dimension. All can be used on woody ornamentals but only certain ones can be used on annual and perennial flowers. Consider using a granular formulation for enhanced crop safety, especially for herbaceous ornamentals. Although certain pre-emergence broadleaf herbicides will suppress crab-

grass, they generally do not provide the level of control seen with the crabgrass preventers.

Crabgrass can be controlled selectively post-emergence using the post-emergence grass herbicides Acclaim, Envoy, Fusilade/Ornamec or Vantage. Since these products have little soil residual, a pre-emergence herbicide should be applied to extend the length of control. Treat prior to tillering of crabgrass for optimum results.

Prostrate spurge (spotted spurge) is a low-growing summer annual broadleaf that germinates during the warm months of late spring and summer. Certain crabgrass preventers such as Pendulum or Surflan are fairly effective on this weed. The combination products on the market, such as Rout, OH2 and Snapshot, provide good control in woody ornamental species. It is difficult obtaining long-term control of spurge since no herbicide provides excellent control of this weed for more than about 2 months. As with crabgrass, split applications can provide longer control. Prostrate spurge is difficult to control post-

emergence. Use careful applications of nonselective herbicides such as Roundup Pro, Finale or Reward.

I generally place *common groundsel* in the summer annual broadleaf category, although it overlaps the



Spotted Spurge

winter annual category as well. It can tolerate mild frost and survive through a mild winter. Most crabgrass preventers provide poor control of this weed and it is, therefore, quite difficult to control in herbaceous plantings.

Products that contain oxyfluorfen, such as the granular materials Rout or Regal O-O, or the liquid formulation Goal, provide excellent control of groundsel. Goal is mainly used on conifers since it will damage foliage of most other ornamental species. The granular formulations are a better choice in landscapes containing a variety of woody species. Other herbicides, such as Gallery, Snapshot, Ronstar and Princep, (if triazine sensitive) will control groundsel. For post-emergence control, use Goal where possible, primarily in dormant conifers

Annuals

▶ Live <1 year

▶ Reproduce by seed

Summer annuals:

Germinate in spring, flowers produce seed in late summer/early fall, die in fall.

Winter annuals:

Germinate fall through late winter, flowers produce seed in spring, die in late spring/early summer.

and dormant deciduous trees. Otherwise use careful applications of a nonselective herbicide.

Winter annuals

Annual bluegrass germinates in fall and early spring. The best way to control it is through application of a crabgrass preventer in August, prior to the initiation of germination. Annual bluegrass tolerates most post-emergence grass herbicides. Envoy is the only one in this group that will control annual bluegrass. Alternatively, the nonselectives such as Roundup Pro or Finale provide excellent control. Kerb will control emerged winter annuals like annual bluegrass in certain established woody ornamentals, along with providing residual control. Barrier/Casoron can also be used for pre-emergence and post-emergence control of a range of winter annual weeds (it can only be used on established woody ornamentals). Kerb and Barrier/Casoron work best when applied under cold conditions in late fall or winter.

Common chickweed is a winter annual broadleaf that germinates in fall and early spring. As with annual bluegrass, timing is critical for a pre-emergence application. Late August would be a good time to treat in most areas. Essentially all pre-emergence herbicide used in ornamentals, with Ronstar a major exception, will control common chickweed. I am often asked in spring how to control chickweed post-emergence. In most ornamentals, especially herbaceous species, there is no selective control of emerged chickweed, as well as other emerged broadleaf weeds. Common chickweed is best con-

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WEED CONTROL GUIDE

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GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SELECTIVE PRE-EMERGENCE AND POST-EMERGENCE CONTROL IN HERBACEOUS AND WOODY ORNAMENTALS.

	<i>Herbaceous ornamentals</i>		<i>Woody ornamentals</i>	
	Selective Pre-emergence control	Selective post-emergence control	Selective pre-emergence control	Selective post-emergence control
Large crabgrass	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prostrate spurge	Yes	No	Yes	No
Common groundsel	Yes	No	Yes	Limited options
Annual bluegrass	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Common chickweed	Yes	No	Yes	Limited options
Bermudagrass	No	Yes	No	Yes
Yellow nutsedge	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Wild garlic	No	No	No	No
Creeping woodsorrel	Yes (from seed)	No	Yes (from seed)	No
Mugwort	No	No	Yes	No



Common chickweed

trolled through pre-emergence herbicide application. Nonselective post-emergence herbicides will control emerged chickweed.

Perennial weeds

Post-emergence herbicides are generally used to control perennial weeds, with a few exceptions. *Bermudagrass* is an example of a perennial weed that often cannot be controlled using pre-emergence herbicides. Although certain pre-emergence herbicides will suppress pegging down of bermudagrass stolons, post-emergence herbicides are required for control. The best option in broadleaf ornamentals are post-emergence grass herbicides such as Vantage, Fusilade/Ornamec or Envoy. Repeat treatments will be needed for control. Although these are systemic chemicals, one application may will not completely kill the rhizome system of bermudagrass.

Yellow nutsedge is a perennial weed that grows especially well in wet sites under full sun. An effective way to control this weed in many herbaceous and woody ornamentals is through a pre-emergence application of Pennant. Barrier/Casoron could be used pre-emergence in selected woody species. Directed spray applications of Basagran or Manage are possible around established woody ornamentals. Alternatively, a non-selective post-emergence herbicide can be spot-applied for control of this weed.

Wild garlic is a common perennial weed in landscapes. Unfortunately, most pre-emergence herbicides have no effect on this weed. Careful applications of Finale or Roundup are the only option in most landscapes.

Creeping woodsorrel is a low-growing perennial with mostly reddish-purple leaves. This plant throws its seed several feet when the seed pods are mature. It is sensitive to the nonselective herbicides Finale and Roundup. Include a pre-emergence broadleaf herbicide to stop re-establishment by seed.

Mugwort (wild chrysanthemum) is one of the most difficult-to-control field nursery weeds and can become a landscape problem

through contaminated nursery stock. There are no selective controls for this weed in herbaceous ornamentals. Barrier/Casoron can be applied in winter for control in established woody ornamentals. This weed can be difficult to control with Roundup. Scout for mugwort in new plantings and remove before it becomes established.

Knowing when different weed species germinate will guide you in timing pre-emergence applications. Grasses and sedges can be controlled selectively in many landscape situations



Mugwort

post-emergence. You'll need to be diligent, especially for perennial weeds, since few options besides application of a non-selective herbicide exist.

Once we learn how to control this entire list of weeds, a new set of species will probably invade our landscapes. Then it will be time to develop a new top 10 list!

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