

## Time for preemergence herbicides, if needed

If weeds were a major concern in your lawn last summer, the coming weeks are the time to apply a preemergence herbicide to prevent their emergence again this year.

Timing of a preemergence herbicide application for summer annual weeds such as crabgrass should be during mid February to March 5 when day temperatures reach 65° to 70°F for four to five consecutive days. This generally coincides with when azaleas and dogwoods first begin to bloom. **Note:** This is not true for chamberbitter.

Chamberbitter requires warmer soil temperatures to germinate. Begin applying a preemergence herbicide around May 1<sup>st</sup> when battling this weed. If you wait until you see weeds, most preemergent type herbicides won't work. You must apply the product just before the seeds germinate/emerge.

The weeds you're seeing in your yard now are not summer annuals. Summer annual weeds aren't up and growing yet. A typical summer annual weed germinates from a seed in spring, grows during spring and summer, produces flowers followed by seeds and then is killed by cold weather in fall or early winter. Summer annual weed seeds are still dormant now awaiting warmer spring temperatures to germinate and emerge.

Summer annual weeds include crabgrass, Florida pusley, chamberbitter, sandspur, old world diamond-flower and spotted spurge. There are many others.

If your lawn has a history of summer annual weeds, one control option is to apply a preemergence herbicide. But remember timing is critical in order for preemergence herbicides to work.

Some preemergence herbicides to look for include oryzalin (Surflan), benefin (Sta-green Crabgrass Preventer, Hi-Yield Crabgrass Preventer), pendimethalin (Pre-M, Pendulum, Turf Weedgrass Control, Halts Crabgrass Preventer), benefin + oryzalin (XL), DCPA (Dacthal) and bensulide (Green Light Betasan Crabgrass Preventer).

For season-long weed control, a second application may be needed about six to nine weeks after the initial application. To activate some products, irrigation or rain may be necessary following application. Because many preemergence products may interfere with lawngrass seed germination, delay reseeding six to sixteen weeks after application.

Overuse of some types of preemergence herbicides can cause your lawngrass to produce short stubby weak roots. So only apply the product if there is a pest to control – in this case, if you have had a history of summer annual weeds. Otherwise, save your money and time. Use preemergence herbicides only on lawns that have been established for at least a year. These products can severely injure newly planted lawns. It is the user's responsibility to read and follow all label directions and precautions when using any pesticide, including herbicides.

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