

Crabgrass Control

By Dr. Leon McIntyre

Crabgrass is a warm season, summer annual weed. Crabgrass has tremendous survival reproductive capabilities. It is unrealistic to expect a crabgrass free lawn. It cannot be eradicated, like many other weeds. The reason is because of the seed load put there by seed producing crabgrass plants. The best control is a dense, healthy turf. Healthy turf will compete well with crabgrass and prevent it from establishing.

Mowing

Mow lawns at 2.5"-3.0" heights. Mowing below 3" will increase the crabgrass competition and seed production.

Fertilization

Where crabgrass is a problem, apply 60-100% of the nitrogen for a lawn in the fall. Avoid applications of nitrogen in the summer because it increases crabgrass vigor & seed production.

Chemical Control

Usually the best way to control crabgrass is with preemergence herbicides. Preemergence herbicides kill crabgrass as it germinates. These products must be applied prior to crabgrass emergence. Crabgrass usually germinates in Northern Missouri about April 15 each year or when the soil temperature reaches approximately 60 degrees F for 3-5 days at the ¼" soil depth. Another rule of thumb is when the forsythia bushes are in bloom. It is time to apply the crabgrass preventer.

<u>Product Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
Balan 60DF	Benefiene
Dimension 1EC	Dithiopyr
Pre-M & Others	Pendimethalin
Dacthal 75W	DCPA
Barricade 65WG	Prodiamine

Most crabgrass control herbicides are combined with fertilizers as weed and feed products. Since fertilization should be minimized in the spring when controlling crabgrass, purchase products low in nitrogen or slow release forms of nitrogen such as methylene ureas, sulfur or polymer – coated ureas. Avoid quick release nitrogen forms such as urea or ammonium nitrogen.

Remember to have the crabgrass preventer applied by April 15, and that most of the crabgrass herbicides will last all season. Last of all, do not use preemergence herbicides on new seedings or before seeding an area.