

Weeds Adding Color to Lawns

With the warm temperatures, our lawns are greening up, as well as the weeds. The plants with the little purple flowers in home lawns are called henbit. If you are not sure this is what you have, check the stems. If they are square rather than round, you have henbit. Though it actually comes up in the fall, most people do not pay much attention to this weed until it starts to flower. Trying to kill it at this stage with a herbicide is usually a waste of time and money. Though the plant may be burned back, it will rarely be killed. So what do we do? Remember, this is a winter annual; it comes up in the fall, matures in the spring and dies as soon as it starts to get hot. All that we can do now is keep it mowed until nature takes its course.

We are all familiar with the yellow dandelions that speckle many of our lawns and produce a white seed head with seeds that blow in the wind. Dandelions, as well as, henbit should be controlled in the fall. But if you missed the fall application, a second opportunity for dandelion control is now here or fast approaching. Research by Purdue University has shown that good control can be achieved with an herbicide applied during or soon after the first flush of flowers. Use a combination product that contains 2,4-D, MCPP and dicamba. Examples would include products such as Trimec, Weed Out, Weed-B-Gon, and Weed Free Zone. If you only have a few dandelions, consider spot treatment rather than a blanket application. There are ornamental plants that are very sensitive to drift from these herbicides, so be careful. Avoid spraying on windy days. The three indicator plants that usually are the first to show damage are tomato, grape and the eastern redbud tree.

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