

Late Fall Can Be A Good Time for Lawn Weed Control

We've finally had enough frost to push the warm season grasses into dormancy, so the bermuda and Zoysia grass mowing season is over for the year. Folks maintaining tall fescue lawns have made their final fertilizer application for the year, and shorter days and cold nights have slowed its growth rate so that mowing frequency is dramatically reduced. Many have finished mulching or raking leaves from their lawns, so the grass plants aren't denied exposure to



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sunlight. Does this mean the lawncare season is finally over? Well, it depends. Those who want to maintain a relatively pure stand of turfgrass with few, if any, weeds may be surprised to learn that now is a good time to fight some common cool season weed pests.

Winter annual weeds such as common chickweed, mouse ear chickweed, henbit, purple deadnettle, and hairy bittercress thrive in the late fall conditions we've experienced so far. These weeds are responsible for the bulk of the pink, purple, and white blooms many have in their lawns in the spring. Wild garlic, aka wild onion, is a perennial lawn weed pest that thrives in these conditions also. Targeting these weeds with a broadleaf herbicide now while they're still relatively young and actively growing can be effective in reducing their populations in lawns.

Broadleaf herbicides (herbicides having activity against broadleaf weeds and not desirable grasses) containing 3 or 4 active ingredients will generally have efficacy against a broader spectrum of weed species than herbicide products containing a single active ingredient. Many garden centers carry a selection of such products throughout the year suitable for homeowners to use. When choosing an herbicide to help manage a weed population, make sure the weeds you want to control are included on the product's label and the product is labeled for use on the desirable turfgrass in your lawn. Some products provide better control in cooler temperatures, so look for one of those for use when temperatures are expected to be 60F or less when you apply it. Take care to ensure you understand and follow the herbicide's use directions.

FROM THE GROUND UP

Help is available to assist you with identifying your weed pests and selecting an herbicide product. You can contact one of the Rutherford County UT/TSU Extension agents at 615-898-7710 for assistance. Another option is to visit the UT Extension turfgrass weed website at [We've finally had enough frost to push the warm season grasses into dormancy, so the bermuda and Zoysia grass mowing season is over for the year. Folks maintaining tall fescue lawns have made their final fertilizer application for the year, and shorter days and cold nights have slowed its growth rate so that mowing frequency is dramatically reduced. Many have finished mulching or raking leaves from their lawns, so the grass plants aren't denied exposure to](#)

. The site gives you access to a weed identification tool called the Mobile Weed Manual that will help you identify weeds and herbicide products to control several different weed species in various turfgrass and ornamental plant species. The site is also home to many Extension fact sheets on turfgrass weed control.

Weed populations can take away from the uniform appearance of the turfgrass that many desire in a home lawn. They also compete with turfgrass plants for space, water, and nutrients and in some instances, out compete the turfgrass and take over an area. These are common reasons many choose to take steps, including herbicide use, to control lawn weeds. Applying an herbicide at the correct time or stage of growth and development in the weed's life cycle can greatly influence its effectiveness. If life gets in the way and you can't put your weed control out at the correct time this season, don't fret. I promise there will be another weed crop for you to fight with next season.



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