

Prevent Crabgrass Now

The temperatures are finally starting to rise. We are now giving thought to our lawns and what we may want to do to brighten them up. Mid-March is the time to apply crabgrass preventers in our area. Crabgrass is a coarse bladed grass that usually starts to emerge in early April and explodes in growth as warm temperatures rise. This is not to be confused with common wiregrass or common Bermuda grass which is a running type of grass that is dormant in the winter time. These grasses lie dormant all winter long but are perennial and will start to turn green in late April or early May and preventers have no effect on these. The general target date for applying crabgrass preventers in our area is March 15 or generally when the yellow forsythia bush is in bloom. We will discuss a newer chemical that makes this window of opportunity much wider than in the past.

For years we relied predominately on a chemical for crabgrass control known as Pendimethlin which is found in the Scott's product 'Halts.' This product set the standard for many years and did a pretty good job. This a moisture activated product and had to be applied close to the exact target date as the clock started ticking when the product was activated and continued for 8 weeks when coverage then ran out. Today, there is new chemistry on the market that is showing superior control over crabgrass. The best known of these is **Dimension**. This is a heat activated product that can be applied during a wider window of opportunity and still give better control. If you apply early in the season the product will not start working until temperatures are warm. One of its great attributes is that if you apply late, even after germination occurs, it has the post emergent ability to kill young crabgrass seedlings up to the third leaf stage. It will continue its control for up to 10-12 weeks. You cannot apply the above product with newly planted grass seed. If crabgrass has been a problem in the past, I would suggest a second application around mid to late May. This is one time where an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! Enjoy the garden!

Mark

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