

“Ask The Plant Groom” by Dale Groom, The Plant Groom™

For: QA1042

Can I use a pre-emergent on my lawn now? - S.M.

You may use weed-preventing aids any time of the year however; I do not recommend their uses this time of the year.

Preventing weeds in our lawns and beds with available pre-emergent aids requires the following to receive maximum results:

- * Determining what type of weed(s) you wish to control by preventing their establishment. Weeds are most often classified as grassy and broadleaf.

If the weeds look like grass, walks, talks and quacks like a grass it is most likely a ... grass. Otherwise it's a broadleaf.

- * If you are unsure of what type(s) of weed category you want to control take a sample to your county's office of Texas Cooperative Extension for identification. (Visit <http://texasextension.tamu.edu/>, click on Contact Your County Office in the left side column top and then your County for location, phone, fax, e-mail, etc.) It is usually not necessary to know the common or scientific name of weeds. It is very important to know if it's a grassy or broadleaf weed to achieve control with pre-emergent aids.

It's also important to know if the target weed pest(s) is/are annual or perennial. Most common perennial grassy or broadleaf weeds are not controlled with pre-emergent aids. However, most annual grassy and broadleaf common weeds are effectively controlled with pre-emergents.

- * After weed type(s) have been identified as annual, perennial and grassy or broadleaf you need to ask, "Are they or it cool season/winter or spring-summer/warm season weeds"? This is critical to help achieve effective control with pre-emergent aids.

- * Target month for most of Texas to apply pre-emergent aids for cool season/winter weed pests is Sept. Early Sept. for South Texas and mid Sept. for North Texas usually works well. Late Feb. - early March is normally the best time for applications to prevent spring/summer weeds. If you are dealing with grass/sand burs a second application may be made around the last of May. For specific suggestions in your County you may contact me at dalegroom@mycvc.net or your local Texas Cooperative Extension office.

- * Select the appropriate pre-emergent to control your target weed pest(s) and apply at the appropriate time according to label

directions. Remember, always apply/use any "gardening aid" according to label directions. The prudent gardener/user of gardening aids reviews product(s) labels currently in their supply before each use.

* Other thoughts/suggestions - The best weed control in home lawns is a thick, healthy and vigorous growing turf. These are achieved by selecting the appropriate grass(es) for your location(s) and providing adequate care. Care includes frequent mowing, irrigating as needed and supplying required nutrients.

Mow frequently enough to remove approximately 1/3 of the grass blade's height each time you mow. Apply water as needed to prevent soil dryness and achieve a soil depth of 6-8" Supply nutrients as recommended by soil tests.

In garden/landscape beds the best weed control is maintaining a 3 - 4" layer of your favorite mulch year round. I like shredded pine bark mulch but if you prefer, hardwood, cypress or other materials included chipped/shredded tree trimmings it's OK, just use them. No mulch will help prevent weeds if it is not utilized.

We misplaced your article on how to kill Bermuda grass out of monkey grass. Please advise on how we can get that piece. - R. L. S.

I'm not sure but you may be referring to a group of products that contains fusillade in them. I suggest you ask for weed abatement aids at your local nursery that contains active ingredients to control grasses in and among existing landscape plantings. Some products may be labeled as Over The Top or similar common names.

When securing help in selecting these products at your local nursery review the labels to make sure they are approved to control your target weed in desired plantings.

In addition to pansies what else do you suggest we plant for color this time of year? - S. K.

I suggest you take a look at viola, flowering kale/cabbage, dwarf snapdragons and garden mums. If you like the "looks" of them plant these beauties ... now.

Dale Groom, CEA-Horticulture, Columnist, Author, Radio/TV Host is also known state wide as The Plant Groom™. Send your lawn, garden and landscape questions to Dale at dalegroom@mycvc.net.

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