

Ask The Plant Groom(tm) by Dale Groom, The Plant Groom(tm)

QA1087

We had a pecan tree limb (huge!) that broke off last month, uprooting another pecan tree in our back yard. It has left me with a hot, sunny spot. I would like to plant something in this sunny spot to give shade, provide flowers for my hummingbirds, and that will not get too large or the roots too invasive for a septic system. What can you suggest? It can be a shrub or tree, whatever. I just hate the bare area that is now prevalent. Thank you for your help. - R. A.

I recommend an *Abelia grandiflora* for your specific application. it is a tall and wide evergreen shrub that blooms throughout our growing season.

During this Texas drought, the leaves on one of my large Live Oak trees have turned brown. Is the tree dead? If it's definitely lost, I want to cut it down now before it dries out too much. Thanks. - B.C.

It may not help but you are not alone with your tree's issue.

I sent my crystal ball out to the tune up shop last may on my 63rd birthday and it hasn't come back yet so I can't say yes or no to your inquiry regarding the tree's viability. Let's think positive.

My recommendation is to water throughly in the drip line of the tree which is at the trees canopy spread every two weeks until we receive sufficient natural irrigation to supply soil moisture 18" deep in your soil, keep your fingers crossed and see what happens next spring.

By June 1, 2007 you should know which if any parts of you tree is indeed dead and then remove them at that time is my council to you.

Help! I have dallisgrass in my lawn that is a St. Augustine/Bermuda mix. I bought MSMA to use with a spray tank. I understand that it will kill my St. Augustine but will probably not kill the Bermuda. My question is can I do that now, or would it be better to kill it out next spring as it emerges so the lawn will have time to recover? I use pre-emergent weed killer but it doesn't seem to affect dallisgrass. Any help you can provide would be appreciated.

Thanks - B. F.

You are correct, MSMA does not have label clearance for applications to St. Augustine grass. If MSMA is applied it will usually terminate St. Augustine grass.

Best results in post-merge weed control is when the plants are tender and actively growing which is the spring for warm season weeds including dallisgrass.

Weed preventers do not affect existing weeds, they only prevent weeds from becoming established. When selecting weed preventing aids be sure the target weeds are listed on the label. This is also true for any weed control aid/product. Remember, always read and follow label directions when utilizing any horticultural/gardening aid.

A couple of options:

- * Hand dig all existing clumps.

- * Pinpoint existing clumps with an application of post-merge aid/product that contains the active ingredient glyphosate. Some folks use a cardboard cylinder, large pipe, large can open top and bottom or some other means to prevent the glyphosate from hitting their desired grasses when applying these products to the individual clumps of dallisgrass. And, some homeowners have even mixed the product according to label directions in a container and utilized a paint brush to 'paint-on' the mixture directly to the leaves of dallisgrass or other weed pests such as Johnson grass with good results.

The decision to follow any of these suggestions or decline is yours.

What is the best way to get rid of stickers? We have a couple of areas where the St. Augustine grass has died out and the stickers have started to take over. Thanks S. S.

The best answer is grow a thick healthy lawn. The second answer is to apply a weed preventing aid at the correct times of year to prevent germination and establishment.

If the stickers at issue are grass/sand burs, weed preventers should be applied in March 1 and June 1 according to label directions.

Make sure products are labeled for grass/sand bur control if this is your target weed pest. Timing is critical. Do apply at the correct times according to label directions.

Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist -Dallas County, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A & M University System, Native Texan, Columnist, Author, Radio/TV Host is also known as The Plant Groom(tm) statewide. Send your horticultural questions to Dale at dalegroom@mycvc.net. To speak with a Master Gardener for free help M - F, 8:30am - 4pm dial 214-904-3053.

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