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INSECT, PLANT DISEASE, & WEED SCIENCE NEWS [No. 88-24] [September 27, 1988]

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**INSECT
PLANT DISEASE
WEED SCIENCE****NEWS**

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No. 88-24
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Control Alfalfa Now - No-Till in '89

Eventually alfalfa stands become unproductive and the land must be rotated to another crop. Plowing is an expensive and sometimes not completely effective way of killing alfalfa. Killing the alfalfa with herbicides is more economical than plowing, is very effective, and leaves the soil less subject to erosion. An economical, consistent alfalfa control treatment is a combination of 1 qt 2,4-D (4 lb/gal) + 0.5 pt Banvel per acre. The herbicide approach will cost \$6.00/A + application cost compared with \$10.00-\$15.00/A for plowing.

Fall is an excellent time to kill alfalfa with herbicides in preparation for next year's row crop. Make sure the alfalfa has at least 4" of green top growth. The month of October is a good time to treat. Next year a row crop can be planted no-till or with minimum seedbed preparation.

Bindweed Control in Gardens, Windbreaks, and Farmsteads

Field bindweed is a persistent perennial weed. Fall is the best time to control field bindweed, especially in gardens, windbreaks, and around farmsteads. Roundup and 2,4-D are both suited for bindweed control in these situations. There are two big advantages to fall control programs: 1) herbicides are quite effective in the fall, and 2) there is little risk of herbicide damage to desirable vegetation.

Field bindweed grows actively in the fall, replenishing its root system. Herbicides applied at this time move more readily into the root system than treatments applied at other times. The end result is better bindweed control with fall applied herbicides.

Fall provides an opportunity to use herbicides in gardens and around trees with minimal danger to desirable plants. Most garden



vegetables are gone by October, allowing the use of herbicides like 2,4-D and Roundup which will not leave residues in the soil to damage next year's garden. After the leaves of deciduous trees change color, they are no longer functioning and will not absorb herbicides if drift occurs. Roundup and 2,4-D amine can be used safely around trees as long as the herbicides are kept off the green bark. With evergreens, care should be taken not to directly spray the needles and buds. Slight drift in the fall is not injurious to evergreens.

Fall Lawn Weed Control

Homeowners are hard to convince that fall is an ideal time to treat lawns for troublesome weeds. The very best control should be expected on dandelions, field bindweed, chickweed, shepherdspurse, henbit, ground ivy, violets, and other broadleaf turf weeds that make fall growth. Excellent herbicides are available. Trimec and Turflon are two products effective on the tough weeds. Apply them anytime in October or early November before a hard freeze. Repeat treatments may be required for ground ivy and violets.

There are definite advantages for fall treating turf weeds: (1) Weed elimination permits turf grasses to fill in areas occupied by weeds. (2) Late fall applications come at a time when gardens, most ornamentals, and trees are less subject to herbicide injury. Neighbors seldom complain when herbicides are applied during the fall season. (3) Some weeds are not always completely killed with herbicides. However, fall treatment can cause the weeds to go into the winter in a weakened condition making them more susceptible to winter-kill. Weeds not killed by spring treatments go into a period of favorable plant growth and are likely to recover.

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