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INSECT, PLANT DISEASE, & WEED SCIENCE NEWS [No. 89-17] [September 26, 1989]

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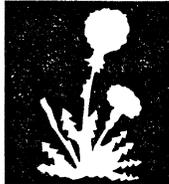
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INSECT PLANT DISEASE WEED SCIENCE

NEWS

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No. 89-17
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In This Issue:

- Musk Thistle Control
- Field Bindweed and Other Perennials
- Fall Weed Control in Alfalfa--Don't Wait Too Long
- Fall Lawn Weed Control

Musk Thistle Control

October and early November are excellent times to control musk thistle providing the weather cooperates. A good fall control program normally eliminates the need for spring control. This is because plants that would flower next summer are normally growing in the fall. However, the success of a fall control program depends on adequate fall rainfall. Dry weather reduces musk thistle seed germination and plant establishment. Where the weather has been dry, there may be no plants to control. Examine the site and determine if the thistle population justifies spraying. Herbicides and per acre rates to use on musk thistle are Tordon 22K at 6 to 8 fluid ounces, 2,4-D + Banvel at 1.0 lb + 0.5 pt, and 2,4-D at 1.5 to 2.0 lb. These treatments are ranked in order of effectiveness for fall application. When mild, moist conditions prevail, all three treatments are effective. Under very dry, cool conditions only Tordon can be expected to perform well. Treatments should be applied after October 1.

Field Bindweed and Other Perennials

Perennial weeds including field bindweed, Canada thistle, and others can be effectively treated with herbicides in the fall. Food storage in the root system of these plants is taking place in the fall. Herbicides applied at this time to plants with excellent top growth readily move down to the roots along with the food. In the fall, temperatures and soil moisture are generally more favorable for plant growth than during the summer, a condition required for best herbicide performance.

Herbicides most useful for controlling these perennial weeds are 2,4-D, combinations of 2,4-D + Banvel, Roundup, and Tordon. Treatment with 2,4-D and combinations of 2,4-D + Banvel must be made repeatedly to obtain satisfactory control. Tordon use for perennial weeds is limited to grazing land and non-crop areas. Curtail is useful in Canada thistle control programs. Control of these weeds in gardens, windbreaks and around farmsteads is best accomplished with Roundup and 2,4-D. These herbicides will not leave soil residues that damage trees, next year's garden, or ornamentals!



Fall treatments can be made any time after mid-September but before hard freezes occur. Daytime temperatures in the 50's are satisfactory. It is not necessary to spray before frost as long as the plants are still green and growing.

Fall Weed Control in Alfalfa--Don't Wait Too Long

Fall is an excellent time to control weeds in established alfalfa. Fields that were weedy this year will almost certainly be weedy again next year unless preventative measures are taken. Many times the problem is not recognized until the alfalfa "greens up" in the spring--then it is too late for most herbicides. This year get a "jump" on the problem.

For alfalfa established one year or longer, there is Karmex, Lexone, Sencor, Sinbar and Velpar. Those herbicides control both winter annual grasses and broadleaf weeds including downy brome and pennycress. Karmex is best suited to low organic matter soils. Treatments can be made either in the late fall or early spring. Alfalfa injury may occur on soils containing less than 1% organic matter with any of the herbicides.

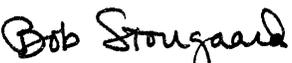
Butyrac or Butoxone (2,4-DB) can be used to control pennycress and other mustards in both established alfalfa and new seedings where plants have at least two trifoliolate leaves. These herbicides should not be used where temperatures will drop to 40° F within three days after application. Bucril is also effective under these situations, but should not be used if temperatures are above 70° F.

Where downy brome is a problem in alfalfa seeded this past spring or summer, Kerb can be applied after late October. It controls winter annual grasses and can be used on both this year's seedings and older stands of alfalfa. In established alfalfa, downy and other annual bromes are most economically controlled with Sencor or Lexone.

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 any time in October or early November before a hard freeze. Repeat treatments may be required for ground ivy and violets. Re-spray about 10 to 14 days after the first application.

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. Fall treatment, however, 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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