

Broadleaf Weed Control

Dandelions. One of the tell-tale signs in the lawn that spring has arrived. Problem is: it's an unwanted sign.

Since we don't like dandelions, it's common practice to run out in the spring and try to get rid of them. Some use herbicide applications. Others may try to tackle them by physical removal. Both tend to require a lot of effort – with mixed results.

For better results, consider a fall herbicide application, instead. In fact, the most effective time to control broadleaf weeds in the lawn is actually late October and in to early November. Dandelions have already produced a flush of new plants – I saw some the as early as two weeks ago at least. By later this month, winter annuals like henbit and chickweed will likely have germinated as well. That means that plants are small and easily controlled with many of our more common broadleaf herbicides. Even the more established dandelions will be better controlled in the fall than in the spring, since they are now moving energy reserves from the top portion of the plant to the roots in preparation for fall/winter weather. Herbicides applied in the fall will be translocated to the roots as well, killing the plant from the roots up.

Products that contain 2,4-D or dicamba (Trimec, Weed-B-Gon, Weed-Out, etc...) tend to be fairly effective, so long as you choose a day that is 50 degrees or higher (the better the weed is growing, the more weed killer will be moved from the leaves to the roots). Products can be used even in colder temperatures, but the killing process will be slowed.

Some of the newer products on the market (Weed Free Zone or Speed Zone) contain yet another active ingredient in addition to those mentioned previously - carfentrazone. The advantage to these products is the quicker response than previously mentioned products, particularly as temperatures move below 50 degrees.

As with any herbicide products, always read and follow label directions. Make sure product is not left in sprayers overnight when freezing temperatures are predicted to avoid damage to application equipment.