

Weeds in Lawns

Weeds occur in all lawns but seldom become problems in well-managed, healthy turfgrass. Poor maintenance practices—such as improper fertilization, watering, and mowing—can weaken turfgrass and predispose it to weed invasion. Total eradication of weeds is not realistic or necessary for most lawns. With good management practices, a lawn can be vigorous and attractive with little or no herbicide use.

Why is weed identification important?

- ◆ Different weeds require different management approaches.
- ◆ Many weed species are associated with a lawn care condition such as overwatering, compacted soil, or low fertility.
- ◆ Identifying the species present can give an indication of an underlying lawn care problem, which can be corrected.

Prevent weed invasions with proper care.

- ◆ Make sure you are growing an appropriate turfgrass species for your area.
- ◆ Regularly check sprinkler heads.
- ◆ Water deeply and infrequently.
- ◆ Mow regularly and remove no more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the leaf blade at each mowing.
- ◆ Fertilize up to four times a year with no more than 1 pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet per application.
- ◆ If needed, alleviate soil compaction with aeration.
- ◆ Remove thatch if it is more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick.

See the **UC Guide to Healthy Lawns**
at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu
for complete information on lawn care.



When weeds invade:

- ◆ Identify the weed species.
- ◆ Determine if there is an underlying lawn care problem, such as improper irrigation or mowing or inadequate fertilizer, and correct it.
- ◆ Remove weeds by hand as you see them, when they are young and before they flower, set seed, form vegetative parts, and spread into patches.
- ◆ Use herbicides as a last resort, and combine with proper cultural control.
- ◆ If used, choose an herbicide labeled for the species of weed you are trying to control and one that is safe for use on your turf type.
- ◆ Avoid fertilizer products containing herbicides.
- ◆ Renovate or replace weak areas of lawn with vigorous new turf.

See **Pest Notes: Weed Management in Lawns**
at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu for more details.



yellow nutsedge

dandelion

smooth crabgrass

Minimize the use of pesticides that pollute our waterways. Use nonchemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products whenever possible. Read product labels carefully and follow instructions on proper use, storage, and disposal.

For more information about managing pests, contact your **University of California Cooperative Extension office** listed under the county government pages of your phone book or visit the UC IPM Web site at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu.

What you use in your landscape affects our rivers and oceans!

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