



Yellow Nutsedge Control in Landscaped Turf

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Yellow Nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus* L.) is a common weed found in many home lawns and landscaped beds in New Jersey and Delaware. Aside from detracting from the aesthetic quality of the turf, yellow nutsedge can compete with desired turfgrasses for water, nutrients and sunlight. If allowed to grow unchecked, yellow nutsedge can quickly spread to infest large areas of turf.

Plant Description

Yellow Nutsedge is a grass-like sedge with erect, triangular-shaped stems that are yellow-green in color. The leaves are also yellow-green, with a thick mid-vein and a very waxy covering. The shallow, fibrous root system often produces many nut-like tubers, which are underground food storage organs. Each of these tubers can germinate and produce new plants. Each new plant can also produce rhizomes that can give rise to additional new plants. Yellow nutsedge is a warm season perennial plant and the above ground foliage does not survive winters in New Jersey and Delaware.

Growth Habit

Yellow Nutsedge thrives in wet conditions and can often be found in low lying areas of landscaped turf with poor drainage. Shoots from underground tubers and rhizomes begin to emerge in late spring/early summer as soil temperatures increase. Heavy infestations of this weed in landscaped turf usually become readily apparent in July and August.

Cultural Control

Maintaining a dense, vigorous turf is the best and most lasting method for reducing the infestation and spread of

yellow nutsedge. It is critical that drainage be improved in low lying areas of the lawn where water accumulates. Avoid frequent light watering or irrigation. Areas of the turf that are thin due to drought stress, insects, or diseases should be repaired by reseeding or sodding.

Hand Removal

If only a few yellow nutsedge plants are present in the landscape, hand pulling may be the best way to selectively eradicate the weed. Begin physically removing the plants as soon as they are observed. Remove the entire plant along with the root system by digging around the base of the plant. Hand removal of mature yellow nutsedge plants is difficult because plants break off at the soil surface allowing regrowth and tuber development to continue. After removal, check the area periodically for regrowth. This approach is effective only if performed on a regular basis.

Chemical Control

Unlike most weeds which infest landscaped turf, yellow nutsedge is not controlled by applications of traditional annual grass weed or broadleaf weed control products. The weed is a member of the sedge family and requires specific herbicides to achieve satisfactory control. The following materials are labeled for control of yellow nutsedge in landscaped turf.

Organic Arsenicals: Ammonium methanearsonate (AMA), Disodium methanearsonate (DSMA), Monoammonium methanearsonate (MAMA), Monosodium methanearsonate (MSMA), Calcium methanearsonate (CAMA).

The organic arsenical herbicides are sold under a variety of trade names and in some cases in combination with



other turf herbicides. While these materials are generally used postemergence for control of crabgrass, they can also effectively control yellow nutsedge. These herbicides are most effective when applied to young actively growing yellow nutsedge plants. **Do not** mow turf for at least 3 days prior to, and following application of these herbicides. Generally, two and sometimes more treatments applied 7- to 10-day intervals are needed for complete control. Soil should be moist before treatments are made. Desirable turfgrasses may be temporarily discolored after treatment, especially if they are under stress from heat or drought. **Do not** irrigate for 24 hours after application and do not apply if rain is forecast within 24 hours of the day you intend to apply the herbicide.

Bentazon (*Basagran*)

This herbicide is most effective when applied to young actively growing yellow nutsedge plants. For maximum control **do not** mow turf for at least 5 days prior to and following application. To improve activity, a crop oil concentrate can be added to the spray solution at a rate of 0.75 oz/1000 sq.ft. Generally, two and sometimes more treatments applied at 10- to 14-day intervals are needed for complete control. However, consult a current label for maximum use rate restrictions per application and per growing season. In perennial ryegrass, repeat applications should be delayed for at least 21 days. **Do not** irrigate

for 8 hours after application and **do not** apply if rain is forecast within 8 hours. As with all postemergence herbicides do not apply to turf under stress from drought, or other pesticide applications.

Halosulfuron (*Manage*)

Unlike the organic arsenicals and bentazon which only control the above ground portion of yellow nutsedge, halosulfuron is translocated to the underground reproductive structures, providing complete control of the plant. Therefore, maximum activity is obtained if yellow nutsedge is allowed to grow to at least the three-leaf stage. It is essential that a nonionic surfactant (with at least 80% active ingredients) be added at a rate of 1-2 quarts per 100 gallons of spray solution (0.25-0.5% volume/volume). Do not mow turf for at least 2 days prior to, or following application. For control of heavy infestations of yellow nutsedge, a second application of halosulfuron may be required 6 to 10 weeks following the initial treatment. However, do not apply more than two treatments during the growing season. **Do not** irrigate for 8 hours after application and do not apply if rain is forecast within 3 to 8 hours. **CAUTION:** After 2 to 3 days in spray solution Manage herbicide will begin to degrade and lose herbicidal activity. At this point, additional Manage herbicide will need to be added to the spray mix or a new spray solution prepared.

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Desktop publishing by Rutgers-Cook College Resource Center

Revised: August 2001

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N.J. AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
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