

Control of prostrate knotweed (and crabgrass?) with preemergence herbicides this fall November 16, 2017

Prostrate knotweed is a summer annual broadleaf weed that typically begins germinating in February in Nebraska. True to form, we noticed knotweed on February 21st in Lincoln this year. The weed is most common in highly trafficked, compacted soils, and areas fitting this description were hopefully cultivated and overseeded this fall to improve soil structure, increase turf density, and reduce prostrate knotweed establishment next year. If cultural management is not improved, this troublesome weed will return each year.



Figure 1. Mature prostrate knotweed (*left*) and knotweed that established in thin turf before being killed by cool temperatures this fall (*right*). Areas heavily infested with knotweed are easily spotted in fall, and help identify areas where soil conditioning and/or a preemergence herbicide should be considered.

Fall knotweed control. If chemical control is necessary, knotweed can be controlled with broadleaf herbicides containing dicamba or triclopyr after emergence next year. Alternatively, areas that were especially problematic this year may benefit from an application of isoxaben (a preemergence herbicide) late this fall. As with other preemergence herbicides, 0.5 inches of rain or irrigation is necessary (within 21 days) of an application of isoxaben – be sure to check product labels for other restrictions.

Fall crabgrass control? Proflam is another option for preemergence control of knotweed this fall. It isn't as effective as isoxaben, but adds crabgrass and other weeds to the list of controlled species next spring. Recent research showed that a single application of proflam in Nov. provided 80% crabgrass control (in 2 of 3 years of the study) when rated on Aug. 15th the following year (Reicher et al., 2014). However, less than 10% control was observed by Aug. in the other year of the study, and the authors conservatively recommend a sequential preemergence herbicide application in early June to achieve season-long control of crabgrass with this strategy.

If necessary, you may be able to time a fall to winter application of either herbicide before rain, but you might consider this application a final task before your or your customers' irrigation systems are winterized to ensure sufficient irrigation follows.

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Reference

Reicher, Z., M. Sousek, and R. Gaussoin. 2014. Fall or late winter applications of preemergence herbicides rarely provide season-long control of crabgrass (*Digitaria* spp.) in Nebraska. *Applied Turfgrass Science* doi: 10.2134/ATS-2014-0024-BR.