Weed control considerations on the first day of fall
September 22, 2016

It's the first official day of fall – it's also nearly 90˚F in Lincoln, with a similar forecast tomorrow. Even so, winter annual broadleaf weeds such as common chickweed have germinated in the area, and the window for broadleaf weed control with herbicides is opening. Summer annual grasses such as crabgrass, foxtails, and goosegrass, are still quite visible, but remember that control with herbicides is not necessary in fall – these grasses will die with the first frost. Here are a few other considerations for each of these types of weeds.

Broadleaf weeds: Fall-applied herbicides are preferred for broadleaf weed control because 1) winter annual weeds are smaller and more easy to control than when they mature in spring, 2) perennial broadleaf weeds are translocating stored energy (and properly applied herbicide) below ground, and 3) cooler temperatures reduce the likelihood of injuring turf or ornamental plants. For best control that will be noticeable this fall, herbicide should be applied by mid to late October. Herbicides applied later in fall can still be effective provided that soil moisture isn't limiting at the time of application, but control will likely not be perceivable until next spring. Herbicides are most effective when applied to actively growing weeds not stressed by extreme temperatures, drought, etc. It is also generally recommended that turf is not mowed within 3 days before or after herbicide treatment – we are currently attempting to further quantify the effects of mowing on herbicide applications. See the table on the following page for herbicide recommendations.

Summer annual grasses: The best way to control summer annual grasses is with dense, healthy turf. Provide adequate fertilizer and overseed thin turf areas this fall (unless you are managing warm-season turf). Preemergence herbicide applications beginning next spring will enhance the control of summer annual grasses. Foxtails and goosegrass germinate later than crabgrass, potentially making these grasses more difficult to control with a single application. Split-applications ensure a sufficient concentration of herbicide in soil to prevent the establishment of these grasses in mid to late summer. Foxtails tend to establish in thin turf, and goosegrass is common in compacted soils. So again, implement necessary cultural practices when environmental conditions are appropriate to encourage healthy turf. Crabgrass, foxtails, and goosegrass may seem difficult to distinguish, but the species are quite distinct when examining seedheads – see the table on the following page for more information.

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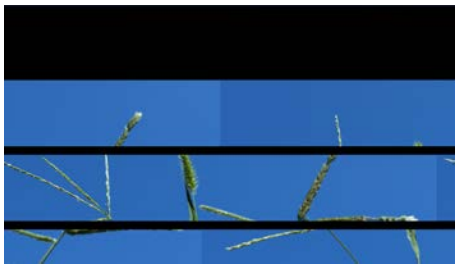
Weed	Herbicides
Winter Annual and Perennial Broadleaf Weeds  ***Common Chickweed***	Premixed herbicides containing 2,4-D, dicamba, and/or MCPP, are effective on most winter annual and perennial broadleaf weeds. For difficult-to-control weeds such as wild violets or ground ivy, herbicides containing triclopyr or fluroxypyr are most effective. Quinclorac is effective on field bindweed. Check herbicide labels for recommended rates and intervals for applications before or after establishment.
Summer Annual Grasses  ***A mixture of crabgrass, foxtails, and goosegrass***  ***Seedheads of crabgrass (left), foxtails (middle), and goosegrass (right)***	Control with herbicides is not recommended in fall.