

**Apply spring preemergence herbicides now
April 2, 2015**

The warm and dry spring weather conditions have accelerated spring soil warming. As of April 1st, all of Nebraska had soil temperatures greater than 50F at 4 inch depth (Fig. 1). Temperatures could be even higher depending on soil type, moisture, sun exposure, distance to a heat sink like a sidewalk, etc. Crabgrass germinates when soil temperatures are sustained between 55 and 60F, thus preemergence herbicides (PRE) for crabgrass should be applied as soon as possible. Hold off application of PREs on areas suspected to have winterkill and on newly-seeded areas. PRE's such as Tupersan (siduron) or Tenacity (mesotrione), which are safe on seedlings, may be used. Do not use Tenacity on seedlings of creeping bentgrass though.

Avoid using PRE products that are combined with fertilizer. Although most PRE products available to homeowners contain nitrogen fertilizer, the spring growth flush will occur naturally during early April and doesn't need encouragement from extra fertilizer. It is much easier to apply a standalone PRE product now and then apply a standalone fertilizer in early May than have to mow twice a week during April. Weed-n-feed PRE products aren't always as convenient as they may seem. Standalone PRE products can be found at most garden centers. If a combination PRE and fertilizer product has to be used, then use the product with the lowest nitrogen content (the first number on a fertilizer bag) or highest levels of slow release nitrogen. Another advantage of a standalone PRE is that you can treat only problem areas and skip areas that don't have a history of crabgrass. This saves money and increases sustainability.

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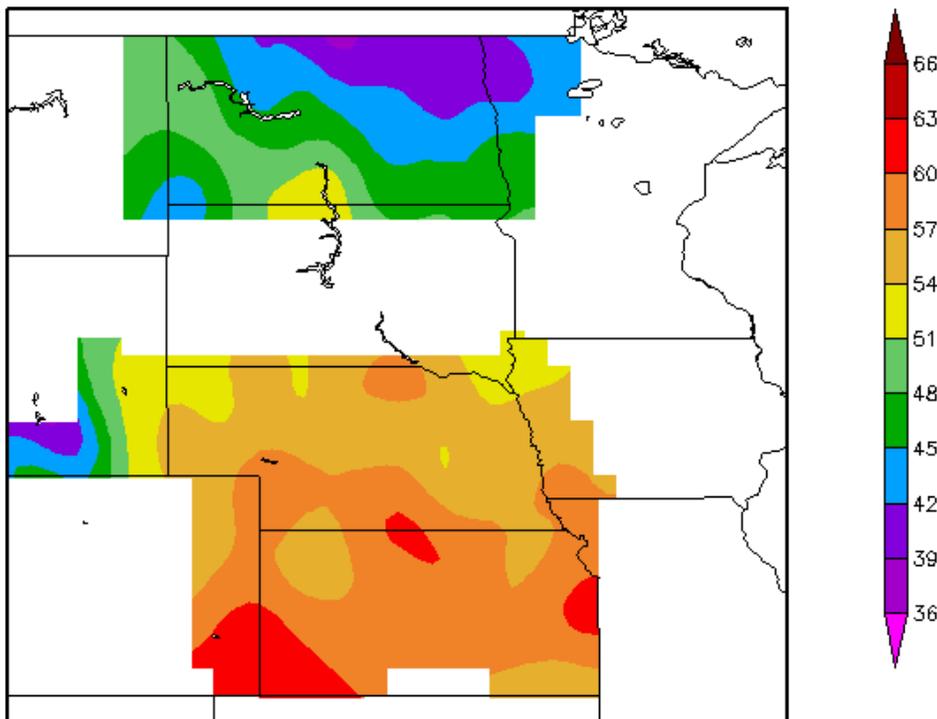


Figure 1. One day average soil temperatures (4" depth) on of April 1, 2015. Figure 2 (bottom). Maps courtesy of the High Plains Regional Climate Center. Original other climate data information can be found at <http://www.hprcc.unl.edu>