

**Twelve ways to maximize control of dandelions and/or other perennial broadleaf weeds****April 24, 2014**

Peak bloom of dandelions is close and is probably here on many south-facing, extremely thin turfs. Following is a quick summary on maximizing broadleaf weed control:

1. Mow as high as practical all year to maintain competitive turf, 3" at a minimum for most homelawns and other turf according to their use. Mow often enough not to remove more than a third of the leaf blade on any single mowing. For homelawns, this will likely be every 5 days during the aggressive spring growth and less frequent during the rest of the season.
2. Keep the turf on the dry side. Irrigate deep and infrequently if at all, wetting to the depth of rooting only after the grass shows signs of drought stress.
3. Fertilize cool-season grasses primarily in the fall.
4. Treat large areas and areas with widespread or excessive populations of perennial broadleaf weeds in September and October rather than in the spring because:
  - a. Fall applications are more effective than spring applications since herbicides will translocate down to the root with the photosynthate as the plant prepares for winter.
  - b. Less risk of damage to non-target plants in the fall since many have died, gone dormant, or lost their leaves.
  - c. Fall applications allow turf to fill in voids left by dying weeds over the late fall and early spring, minimizing future weed pressure.
5. Limit spring applications primarily to spot-treating the few weeds that may have escaped last fall's application or germinated since that application.
6. If applications are made in spring, apply prior to peak bloom of dandelion.
7. If applications are made in spring at temps < 70F, choose ester formulations over amines to improve penetration and control.
8. Lower spray volumes (0.5 – 2.0 gals/1000 sq ft) are more effective than higher spray volumes.
9. Apply liquid herbicides to dry leaves of weeds to maximize absorption.
10. Apply granular herbicides+fertilizers to wet leaves of weeds so the granules stick to the leaves and maximize absorption.
11. Regardless of the season or type of application, apply when no rain in the forecast so the products stay on the leaves of the weed.
12. As always, avoid applications to impervious surfaces and sweep or blow granular product off these surfaces back into the turf.

**More details are available at:**

- Lawn Care Pro Series: Broadleaf weed control:  
<http://turf.unl.edu/pdfcaextpub/Probroadleafweedcontrol2012a.pdf>
- Turf 101: Why are broadleaf herbicides more effective in the fall than spring?  
<http://turf.unl.edu/pdfctarticles/Turf101fallbdlv.pdf>
- For professionals: Improving spring dandelion efficacy and safety to non-target plants  
[http://turf.unl.edu/pdfctarticles/March\\_dandelions.pdf](http://turf.unl.edu/pdfctarticles/March_dandelions.pdf)
- Maximizing safety to non-target plants with spring-applied broadleaf herbicides  
[http://turf.unl.edu/pdfctarticles/april\\_springdandelionoffsitedamage.pdf](http://turf.unl.edu/pdfctarticles/april_springdandelionoffsitedamage.pdf)

**Zac Reicher, Professor of Turfgrass Science, [zreicher2@unl.edu](mailto:zreicher2@unl.edu)**