

## Targeted Weed Control

Crabgrass (annual) - Seeds are not shade tolerant. Keep turf thick by reseeding in the fall and mowing high. If herbicide is necessary, spot treat only with a pre-emergent in early spring.



Quackgrass (perennial) - Rhizomes spread underground. It is best to dig out entire patch and reseed area. Note that only "kill-all" herbicides will kill quackgrass and will also kill anything near it, including healthy lawn.



Broadleaf Weeds - Dandelions, thistles, buckhorn, chicory, clover, creeping Charlie, among others can be dug out. This is most effective in the spring, when root food reserves are at their lowest. Try to dig or cut the roots as deeply as possible (3-5"). Herbicides containing 2, 4-D, MCPP, or Banvel (dicamba) will control most broadleaf weeds. Dicamba should only be used on difficult weeds because it can leach through the soil and absorbed by tree roots, harming or killing the tree. Use before or after gardening season for the same reason. Most broadleaf herbicides are very volatile at temperatures above 80° F and the vapor can drift, injuring nearby plants. These types of herbicides are most effective in the fall.



## Final Thoughts

Battling weeds can be time-consuming, frustrating, and expensive. Your best defense against weeds is a landscape plan. This will help determine if grass is the best alternative for the problem areas in your lawn.

Some "weeds" are beneficial but have gotten a bad reputation by commercial fertilizer companies trying to sell products. For instance, White Clover was once highly regarded in lawns for its soft texture and contribution of nitrogen to the soil. It is also attractive to bees and other important pollinators. With its medicinal and produce properties, Dandelions also offer many benefits and are some of the first spring food for bees.



Soil contains thousands of weed seeds and even healthy lawns will have some weeds. Learn to live with a few of them. If weeds start to invade your lawn, examine your maintenance program and make the necessary adjustments to produce a healthier lawn. Remember weak lawns lead to weedy lawn, not vice-versa. If you decide that an herbicide is necessary, consider spot treatments rather than treating the entire yard.

## Village of Bloomfield

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## Got Weeds?

Let's talk about  
Lawn Weed Control.

MS4 Ed Information

- Pesticide & Fertilizer  
Application



## → Crabgrass and Thistle got you down?

Your lawn is engulfed and you've decided to fight back. Before using environmentally unfriendly herbicides and pesticides, develop a turf management plan. Weeds are a symptom of more serious problems and herbicides will only treat the symptoms. Weeds do not create unhealthy lawns, unhealthy lawns produce weeds. Good turf management is the 1st step in an effective, environmentally sound weed control program. Excess fertilizers are polluting our creek and waterways. The chemicals in fertilizers are washing into our storm sewers from lawns in the village. To have clean drinking water and healthy waterways for fishing and swimming in Wisconsin, we need to find ways to keep the chemicals in fertilizers from getting into our waterways. Fertilizer that finds its way into our waterways fuels the too rapid and harmful growth of algae and other aquatic plant life. Sometimes the growth is so explosive it creates an algal "bloom" with millions of organisms discoloring the water. This excessive growth causes an unhealthy increase in the amount of organic matter within a water body, a process called *eutrophication*. This leads to "fish kills" and makes water unsafe for people and animals.

## → Lawn Establishment

**-Soil:** Poor drainage & compacted (hard) soils cause some of the most serious turf problems. Although turf grasses have difficulty growing in these areas, weeds grow very well. Lawn aeration can help with these issues.

**-Seed Selection:** Use grass seed that contains very little "weed seed"(.05%) and "other crop seed"(.15%). If your yard has a lot of trees, select a shade-tolerant grass species.

## → Maintenance by Mowing

**-Mow High:** Set your mower at 2 1/2 -3" to provide more leaf area to shade the soil. Weeds thrive in bare, sunny soil but suffer under tall, dense turf. Longer length also helps the grass produce more food reserves and deeper root system. Near the end of the mowing season, however, cut the grass shorter, about 2" Long grass increases the chances of winter injury and snow mold.

**-Mow often:** It's best not to remove more than 1/3 of the leaf blade. Therefore, if you normally cut the lawn 2 1/2" high, mow when the lawn is 3 1/4" tall. Removing more than 1/3 of the leaf blade shocks the lawn and stops the root growth. It also produces long grass clippings that cannot easily filter down to the soil surface where they decay.

**-Keep the Blade Sharp:** Your mower blade should be sharp. Sharpen the blade at the beginning of each season and as needed throughout. Dull blades will tear the lawn, creating entry points for diseases and increasing water loss from the leaves. Finally, mow when the grass is dry and leave the clipping n the lawn. Clippings can provide between 20-50% of the nitrogen needed by your lawn.

## → Fertilizing

Too much fertilizer, not enough fertilizer, or fertilizer applied at the wrong time can weaken your lawn and allow weeds to enter. Your objective is to apply the right amount of fertilizer at the right time.

Apply up to 1lb of nitrogen per 1,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of lawn in mid-October and again in early June if needed.

Infertile soils can cause the grass to become thin and more susceptible to not only weeds, but attacks from white grubs and other soil-infesting insects. Similarly, too much fertilizer, or fertilizer applied in early spring or early fall, reduces root growth and increases disease problems. Choose a fertilizer that contains very little phosphorus (the middle number on the bag). Phosphorus (also called "P" or phosphate) is a serious pollutant in lakes and streams.

**Weed & Feed Mixes:** Many homeowners buy fertilizer/herbicide mixes, which sometime lead to unnecessary herbicide applications. Herbicides are frequently found in the water that flows through storm sewers, most of which empty into the nearest stream. You can help keep our waterways pesticide-free by:

-If you spread granular fertilizer, keep it on the lawn. If granules accidentally land on paved areas, sweep them onto the grass.

-If you use a liquid herbicide, be careful not to overspray the lawn and do not spray on a windy day. The herbicides may land on the street or sidewalk and wash into the storm sewer. They may also drift onto shrubs and sensitive garden plants, or across your property line.

-When cleaning your fertilizer application equipment, do so on the lawn. The rinse water will contain contaminants that you do not running off down the driveway or sidewalk.