

## FC Noxious Weed Control Best Management Practices



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# Yellow nutsedge

*Cyperus esculentus*

Family: Cyperaceae (Sedge)

Class B Noxious Weed  
Control and Containment

## Background Information

**Yellow nutsedge** is a Class B noxious weed in Franklin County requiring control. Yellow nutsedge is sometimes referred to as nutgrass however, it is not a grass. It belongs to the sedge family. Sedges differ from grasses in appearance and habitat preference. Most sedges have triangular stems and prefer cooler, wetter environments than grasses. Yellow nutsedge is widespread across much of the world and considered one of the most problematic weeds worldwide. It is highly adaptable to irrigated agricultural areas, roadsides, ditches and home landscapes. Reproduction occurs primarily from underground tubers that form at the end of underground stems called rhizomes. Plants begin to produce tubers at a very young age, typically by the time the plant has 6 or 7 leaves. A single plant can produce several hundred tubers during the summer. Yellow nutsedge can also spread by rhizomes. It produces a seedhead but its seeds rarely germinate. Tubers and rhizomes of yellow nutsedge can survive in the soil for 3-4 years.



Yellow nutsedge produces a golden seed head, but reproduces primarily from underground tubers.

## Impacts

**Yellow nutsedge** competes with crops for nutrients, light and moisture, reducing yield. There has been research suggesting this species may produce chemicals toxic to crops. Farming activities, particularly tillage and irrigation, play a crucial role in its distribution in infested fields. It is a problem in lawns, particularly in areas that have been converted from farmland. Yellow nutsedge tubers can easily spread from one area to another by topsoil movement and construction activities.

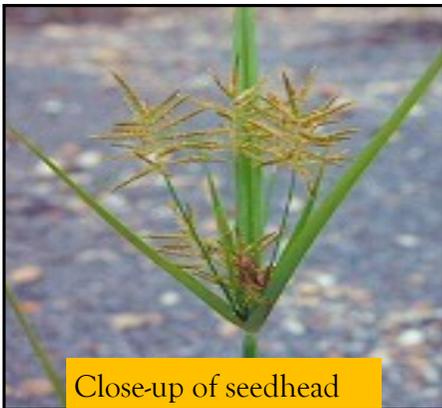
## Key Identifying Traits

- ◆ Leaves are narrow and grass-like with a 3 ranked leaf arrangement.
- ◆ Leaf and stem color is yellowish-green. Leaf has a prominent midrib.
- ◆ Stems are erect and triangular.
- ◆ Flowers and seedhead are golden-brown.
- ◆ Tubers are small and nut-like.
- ◆ In the lawn, yellow nutsedge grows taller than the turf.



Yellow nutsedge grows faster than turf during the hottest summer months.

## Biology and Ecology



- ◆ A fibrous rooted perennial, that grows 12-32 inches tall
- ◆ Reproduces by tubers and rhizomes.
- ◆ Actively grows in the heat of the summer when cool-season grasses slow down.
- ◆ Prefers moist soils
- ◆ Frost kills above ground growth, but tubers survive and overwinter in the soil.



## Control Measures

**Prevention:** Soil clumps may contain tubers and rhizomes which adhere to tillage and farm equipment. Clean thoroughly before entering uninfested fields. Spot treat isolated patches of yellow nutsedge with an appropriate herbicide to further reduce spreading.

**Biological:** None available

**Cultural:** Healthy competitive vegetation reduces open spaces which lessens the chance for invasion. Growing a healthy, vigorous stand of turf will compete with yellow nutsedge.

**Mechanical:** Plants can be dug up when small

**Chemical:** Yellow nutsedge is most susceptible to herbicides in its early growth stages because it has not yet begun to produce tubers. Glyphosate, a nonselective post-emergent herbicide is available to homeowners for use in the landscape. Selective post-emergent herbicides containing halosulfuron or sulfentrazone + quincloric provide suppression. Agriculturally a number of herbicides are available.

**ALWAYS FOLLOW LABEL INSTRUCTIONS, THE LABEL IS THE LAW**

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Photos: WA State NWCB, and Betsy Crysel, FCWB.