

Timing Weed Control

By David Mow, Morgan County Soil and Water Conservation District

Everyone has weeds they would like to get rid of. The thing most people don't understand is that you need to know what that weed is, so you know when to do your control work. If you try to kill something at the wrong time you could be wasting time, energy, and money.

One of the common weeds people fight is Common Chickweed. What they don't know is that it is a winter annual. It sprouts in the fall, grows during the winter, and flowers and goes to seed early in the spring. If you try to control it in the spring, you are already too late. The time to control this is in the fall, using a preemergent that prevents the seed from germinating.

A lot of people want to control the invasive trees or shrubs, like Autumn Olive, Bush Honeysuckle, White Mulberry or Callery Pear in the spring when they can see them flowering, but this is when the sap is moving up the stems and any herbicide you use will not get to the roots. For this type of control, you want to wait until at least June or later when the sap is moving to the roots so you can kill them and not have a lot of resprouts.

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Control of perennials like Canada Thistle or Johnson Grass also needs to be done later in the summer so the herbicides are going to the rhizomes. Indiana state code considers both noxious weeds (IC 15-16-7-2), this means that you need to prevent them from going to seed on your property, which means cutting early to get the flowers, then coming back with an herbicide to kill the roots. Morgan county does have a weed control board. The weed control board shall require persons who own: (1) real estate; or (2) easements, rights-of-way, or other similar interests in real estate; in the county to control and contain noxious weeds growing on the real estate.

Control of biannual plants like Poison Hemlock, Queen-Ann's-Lace, or Garlic Mustard, can be done over the winter when they are in their first-year rosette stage.

They can be dug. Caution should be used when digging Poison Hemlock because of the toxins it contains. Also, an herbicide can be used when the temperature is above 50°.

Some things need to be controlled during the middle of summer, like Japanese Stiltgrass. It is an annual grass, that sprouts



JAPANESE STILTGRASS

in May and produces its seeds for next year by the end of August. Stiltgrass is very susceptible to herbicide, so a very low concentration will kill it and most other plants will not be terribly affected.

If you would like more information on what plants you have and the best method

of control for them, including timing of that control, you can request a property survey or send a photo, including the whole plant, to the Morgan County SWCD at invasivemorgancounty@gmail.com or Purdue Extension Educator, Michele Jones at jonesm@purdue.edu

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