

A close-up photograph of a spring crabgrass plant growing in a lawn. The plant has several long, narrow, green leaves radiating from a central purple stem. The surrounding lawn is a mix of green grass and dry, brown grass blades.

Spring Crabgrass Control in Virginia's Lawns

Mike Goatley, Extension Turfgrass Specialist, CSES Department

Shawn Askew, Extension Turfgrass Weed Specialist, PPWS Department

Spring: a Phenologically Exciting Time

Timing for PRE crabgrass herbicide applications is best based on using one of our common plants in the landscape: forsythia.

Make the application between 100% bloom and 50% bloom drop to maximize herbicide efficacy.



Read labels carefully to ensure you are purchasing an effective PRE herbicide for crabgrass control

The advertising here does not leave a lot to the imagination on what this product is intended to control!



Standard PRE Herbicides for Crabgrass Control in Lawns

Standard PRE herbicides used in commercial Weed and Feed products:

pendimethalin
dithiopyr
prodiamine
oxadiazon

These (particularly the top 3) are the standard herbicide components in most weed and feed products.

benefin, benefin + trifluralin,
benefin + oryzalin
bensulide

These are often available as stand-alone herbicides.

Weed and Feed

- This product is intended to fertilize the lawn as well as control crabgrass.
- These products generally work well for cool-season turfgrasses, likely providing all the N they will need for a spring application.
- They often do not fit the best fertility timing for our warm-season grasses because it is desirable to apply the first significant application of N after complete spring greening. However, they must be applied prior to greening in order to gain crabgrass control.



Organic weed control options?

- Corn meal is great for corn bread, grits, and muffins but has absolutely NO activity on crabgrass. We're talking about CORN GLUTEN MEAL:
 - Commercially available formulations will provide 75% or better control of germinating crabgrass, but the residual control will be much less than for standard herbicides.
 - Will also be applying approximately 1 lb of N/1000 sq ft with treatment.



Chemicals that meet specific needs of spring seeding establishments

Siduron (Tupersan™)

- **Cool season turf only**, applied either before, at, or immediately after seeding cool season turfgrasses
- Crabgrass is by far the major weed controlled; poor activity on most other weeds

Quinclorac (Drive™)

- Applied as a POST treatment for crabgrass, but has excellent flexibility in its timing re: seed establishments of either cool-season or warm-season grasses. Also has activity on many other grassy and broadleaf weeds
- **Also an outstanding** clover control product
- Methylated seed oil recommended as a spray additive when used as a postemergent weed control treatment



Let VT and VCE staff know how we might help!