



Yard & Garden **BRIEF:**

CONTROLLING CRABGRASS

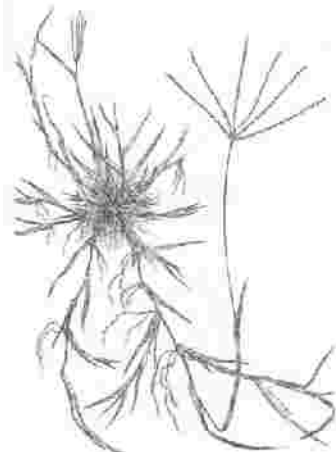
Crabgrass is a recurring problem in many home lawns, but it need not be. Crabgrass is a warm-season annual grass. Our lawns are composed of cool-season perennial grasses. Providing the right environment for desirable grasses to flourish deprives crabgrass of its best environment.

To keep lawns thick and healthy so there's little space for crabgrass seed to sprout, you should:

- Mow frequently, removing only 1/3 of the blade length each time.
- Set the mower high: 2½" to 3" during the hottest part of the summer.
- Water consistently and thoroughly throughout the growing season, if possible. Apply enough water to bring the weekly total to one to one and a half inches of rain and irrigation water combined.
- Fertilize more heavily in fall than spring.
- Aerate the lawn in early fall as soon as temperatures cool, if soil is compacted or clay-like.

When crabgrass is thick and unsightly in late summer, use a de-thatching rake or a power rake to remove most of it. This prepares the ground for overseeding which can take place between mid-August and mid-September in Minnesota.

CHEMICAL CONTROL



Crabgrass, viewed from the top

Illustration: *Common Weeds of the United States*

These chemicals should be watered into the ground two weeks before you expect crabgrass seeds to sprout. The best time is usually late April or early May. (Typically, crabgrass sprouts around Memorial Day in the Twin Cities area.)

For serious crabgrass problems, apply pre-emergent herbicide a couple of weeks earlier to "hot spots" along curbs, sidewalks, and driveways, and sunny, south-facing, slopes. Do the rest of the yard in early May. Then repeat the application again the second or third week of June.

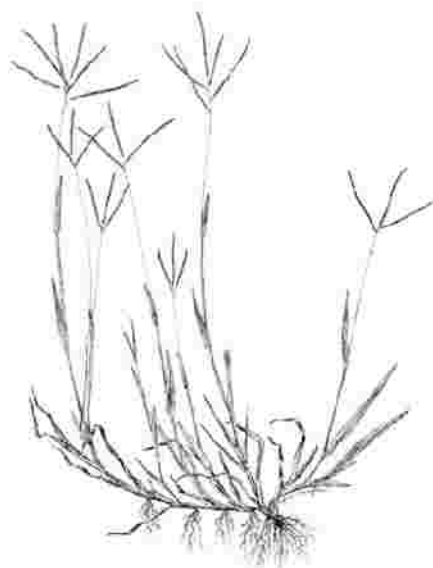
Pre-emergent chemicals have names such as Balan, Benefin, Team, Dacthal, Tupersan, and others. Only Tupersan (also called siduron) can be used if you are planting grass seed at the same time. All others will stop Kentucky bluegrass from

sprouting. Read and follow label directions carefully.

Crabgrass does not all sprout at once, so it might still be worthwhile to apply a pre-emergent herbicide even after a little crabgrass has begun to show up. It won't damage the plants that are already visible, but will prevent more from sprouting.

There are products made to spray on crabgrass after it has emerged, but they are only effective when the crabgrass is very young and tender. By late July and August, when crabgrass is very noticeable, these products are much less effective, and may also brown the lawn temporarily.

In many situations, chemical applications will not be necessary every year. If crabgrass is a persistent problem, re-examine your lawn care practices and work to thicken and improve the lawn, if at all possible.



Crabgrass
Common Weeds of the United States

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