

Common Weeds in North Florida Lawns

by Erin Harlow

3 Types of Weeds

- **Grasses** - These weeds have parallel veins and leaves that are longer than they are wide. Examples include turfgrasses, onions, and bamboo.
- **Broadleaves** - These weeds have showy flowers and net-like veins. They are related to ornamental shrubs and trees.
- **Sedges** - Sedges have triangular stems, bright, shiny leaves, and parallel veins.

Treatment Options

- **Pre versus Post** - Treatment options are listed as preemergence (pre) or postemergence (post). Pre refers to prior to the weed germinating. Post refers to after the weed has germinated.
 - Preemergence applications have to occur before the weed germinates. In North Florida that is usually around March 1st and October 15th each year. Treatments should be scheduled at or before these times.
 - Postemergence applications should follow label recommendations for timing and spot treating is recommended over broadcast applications unless necessary.
 - The chemical recommendations in this publication are listed by active ingredients in the product and based on research by the University of Florida.
 - Make sure you read and follow all of the directions on the label.
 - It is important to know what species and cultivar of turf you have to select the correct product.
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Chamberbitter

Scientific Name: *Phyllanthus urinaria*

Classification: Broadleaf, summer annual

Growth Habit: upright, woody stem

Description: This aggressive summer annual has a reddish stalk and bears seeds directly on the underside of the midrib on the leaves. It has an deep tap root and can grow in full sun or shade.

Chemical Control:

Pre - atrazine, isoxaben

Post - atrazine, simazine



Terry DeValle, UF/IFAS



Erin Harlow, UF/IFAS

Crabgrass

Scientific Name: *Digitaria spp.*

Classification: Grass, summer annual

Growth Habit: Spreading, prostrate

Description: There are five species of crabgrass that are common in Florida: India, blanket, southern, tropical and smooth crabgrass. Leaf blades vary in size from 1 inch to over 2 inches long. Depending on the species, the blades and sheaths may be hairy or smooth. Crabgrass is generally considered a summer annual and germinates at soil temperatures of 50°F – 55°F or greater.



Chemical Controls:

Pre - benefin, pendimethalin, prodiamine

Post - hand pull or use a non-selective herbicide (glyphosate)

Dollarweed

Scientific Name: *Hydrocotyle spp.*

Classification: Broadleaf, perennial

Growth Habit: Creeping

Description: Dollarweed is sometimes called Pennywort. It reproduces from seed, underground rhizomes and sometimes tubers. It has a bright, shiny, flat leaf that is round with scalloped edges. There are several species of dollarweed found in Florida. The petiole (leaf stalk) is attached to the bottom of the leaf towards the center, not on the edge. The flowers are shaped like umbrellas (umbels) and white in color. They are made-up of several 5-petaled small flowers.

Chemical Controls:

Pre - atrazine, isoxaben

Post - atrazine, clopyralid, 2,4-D, dicamba+2,4-D (check the turf cultivar), imazaquin, metsulfuron



Doveweed

Scientific Name: *Murdannia nudiflora*

Classification: Grass-like, summer annual

Growth Habit: Creeping, succulent

Description: This creeping summer annual has parallel-veins and small purple flowers. The seeds are round capsules. The plant is fleshy and has fibrous roots.



Chemical Controls:

Pre - atrazine, simazine

Post - atrazine, 2,4-D+dicamba (check turf cultivar), sulfosulfuron

Old World Diamond-Flower

Scientific Name: *Hedyotis corymbosa*

Classification: Broadleaf, summer annual

Growth Habit: prostrate

Description: Old world diamond-flower has smooth stems with opposite leaves. The leaves are narrow and lanceolate. The flowers are small and white and arise on stalks.



Chemical Controls:

Pre - none

Post - atrazine, carfentrazone

Prostrate Spurge

Scientific Name: *Chamaesyce humistrata*

Classification: Broadleaf, summer annual

Growth Habit: Prostrate, does not root at nodes

Description: Like all spurges, it has a milky sap when the stem is broken. The leaves are opposite, round and usually have a reddish spot on the upper leaf. The leaf is not symmetrical.



Chemical Controls:

Pre - atrazine, isoxaben, simazine

Post - atrazine, carfentrazone, 2,4-D+dicamba (follow label directions to minimize turf injury), metsulfuron, simazine, sulfentrazone

Yellow and Purple Nutsedge

Scientific Name: *Cyperus esculentus*

Classification: Sedge, perennial

Growth Habit: Upright

Description: Yellow and purple nutsedge are upright perennials that have triangular stems and bright leaves. The leaves are usually longer than the flower stalk. Both plants form underground runners. The yellow nutsedge has runners that end at tubers and do not connect plants, while the purple form a chain of plants. Yellow nutsedge leaf tips come to a point as compared to the thicker tip of purple nutsedge. Seeds form at the end of a stiff stalk. Yellow nutsedge seeds are yellow to brown and purple nutsedge are purple in color.



Chemical Controls:

Pre - sulfentrazone + prodiamine

Post - halosulfuron, imazaquin, sulfentrazone, sulfosulfuron

Torpedograss

Scientific Name: *Panicum repens*

Classification: Grass, perennial

Growth Habit: Spreading

Description: Torpedograss is a perennial that has sharply-pointed spreading rhizomes that are white in color. The leaf blades are sparsely hairy on the top and have pointy tips. The stems can grow upwards of 4 or 5 feet if left unchecked. Seedheads may be present on more mature plants, although seeds do not germinate well in Florida and the plant mainly reproduces by the rhizome.



Chemical Controls:

Pre - none

Post - atrazine, carfentrazone (limited control), handpull

For more information on turf diseases and control options, download the University of Florida's Pest Control Guide for Turfgrass Managers at http://turf.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/2012_UF_Pest_Control_Guide.pdf.

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