**Eliminating Poison Ivy and the Lawn**

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One of the most important and useful herbicides is glyphosate. Most of us know it as Round-Up, but it is the active ingredient in several products.

Glyphosate is a contact herbicide that kills weeds and grasses when it is applied to the green portion of the plant. It is especially effective at this time of the year for controlling poison ivy and poison oak. If you have a patch of the dangerous weeds, mix glyphosate as the label directs, and apply it to the leaves and green stems of the plants.

The glyphosate translocates from the leaves into the roots of the poison ivy and will kill the whole plant. There is even a special formulation of Round-Up that identifies itself as especially effective in controlling poison oak and poison ivy.

As important as glyphosate is in the effort to control poison ivy, it has many other uses. More and more, the herbicide is used by individuals converting their lawn grass to a water-saver or xeriscape landscape.

Glyphosate sprayed on St. Augustine, Bermuda grass or other lawn grass now is very effective in preparing the site for the planting of groundcovers, perennials and other components of a low-water, low-maintenance landscape.

The killed sod serves as a perfect planting bed for the new plants. It is especially useful as a planting bed for groundcovers that take some time to fill in. The killed sod is effective mulch that gives Asiatic jasmine, ruellia, liriope or other groundcovers some time to develop in the absence of weeds.

Like poison ivy, lawn grass is in an ideal state of growth to be susceptible to glyphosate. Mix up the herbicide as per the label and apply it evenly with your backpack sprayer.

A morning application on a sunny warm day when rain is not forecasted seems to work best. Glyphosate is a non-specific contact herbicide that could potentially kill flowers and even shrubs if it is accidentally sprayed on, or even drifts, to their leaves during the application process, so care must be taken if it is used. The product will not penetrate bark and is deactivated if it hits soil. The relocation action occurs in the target plant after the herbicide dries on the green portion of the plant, but it will not act on other plants once it dries on the grass blades or leaves. That means that glyphosate-killed plants can be safely used for the compost pile and no damage will occur if you walk from a treated area to an untreated area.

Sprayed lawn grass will usually show some discoloration within a week of the application of glyphosate, but the grass will not show a complete kill for several weeks. The initial discoloration is an indication that the glyphosate has worked and you can begin planting into the sod at that point.

A lawn conversion is a relatively large job, so most would use a glyphosate concentrate mixed and applied with a backpack sprayer, but for small pieces of turf, a pre-mixed glyphosate product with its own application nozzle also works.

Other uses for glyphosate at this time of the year include killing Bermuda grass that has invaded raised bed gardens or other planting areas that are free of vegetables or flowers. For a few more weeks, until cold weather moves Bermuda grass into dormancy, it is very susceptible to glyphosate. Remember that an application kills the roots and all.