

## Pest Control

06-20-2019

Bermuda grass is a drought tolerant, pest free lawn grass for full sun but it can also be an aggressive weed. As a weed it spreads across the top of the ground and under the ground at a high rate. You can attempt to pull up Bermuda grass but if any remnant of root remains it will resprout. Even dried pieces of the stem and root can start new plants.

The best way to control Bermuda grass in flower beds or shrub borders is to spray it with one of the contact herbicides specific for grass, Among the products available are Over the Top, Grass be Gone, Poast, Fusilade, or Ornamec. The products work best if they are sprayed on actively growing Bermuda grass foliage. The active ingredient is absorbed by the green portion of the grass and translocated to the roots which it also kills. The active ingredient does not affect the flowers, shrubs or other broad-leafed plants. The grass will show a slight color change in a week and completely kill the Bermuda grass in about 3 weeks.

Issues that slow down the control are usually related to the Bermuda grass weed being dried out and not actively growing.

Note that the products are not labeled for use in the vegetable garden. Also review the label for the specific products sensitivity to high temperatures, some may be more sensitive than others. Another place that the grass-specific contact herbicides don't work is in removing Bermuda grass from St Augustine, zoysia, or buffalo grass. The active ingredient kills other grasses just as well as it does Bermuda grass. Application of one of the products on grass encroachments on property borders or sidewalks results in straight lines of control.

If you have Bermuda grass in your St Augustine lawn, the best way to encourage the St Augustine is to keep it well watered and mow it high (at least 3.5 inches). If the lawn is mowed low, is allowed to dry out and hosts lots of traffic, the Bermuda grass will dominate.

Follow label instructions on all pesticides, including the grass-specific contact herbicides.

Another product that greatly increases the effectiveness of controlling a particular weed group is Stump and Vine Killer products with Triclopyr as the active ingredient. The version retailed by Bonide is distributed in an 8oz. ounce container for about \$ 13. The cap includes a brush with which you can apply a small amount of the product to a fresh cut of a hackberry, mulberry, Chinaberry, or other unwanted seedling.

Do your usual pruning trip through the shrub border, rose garden and fence line to remove the unwanted seedlings with the pruning shears, but this time add a step where you apply the "stump and vine killer" to the fresh cut. The active ingredient is translocated into the root system and kills the whole plant including the roots. The result is that in most cases the stump does not resprout. It takes a little extra time to add the "stump and vine killer", but it saves a lot of effort because you will not have to recut that seedling again and again.

The use of a small amount of the active ingredient on the cut stump also means that there is very little potential for any volatilization or accidental application to roses or other surrounding plants.

If you live in or close to Guadalupe County and want to become part of the Master Gardener Chapter, they are recruiting the next class to begin July 30, 2019. The class will meet every Tuesday afternoon from 1-5PM through November 19 in Cibolo. The Guadalupe County Chapter is one of the Chapters I work closest with in the San Antonio Region. They deliver environmentally appropriate gardening education, manage community gardening projects, and promote water conservation. As a Master Gardener you receive excellent training, work on important projects and have fun. The registration deadline is July 19. There is a \$210 training fee. For more information contact Karen Ulrich at 210-422-1594 or visit the GCMG website at [www.guadalupecountymastergardeners.org/](http://www.guadalupecountymastergardeners.org/)