

Gardening Question and Answer

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Q. I have Bermuda grass running over my recently replanted (3 months) Asiatic jasmine. Of all the contact herbicides for weed grasses that you describe is there any one of the products that would be best in that situation?

A. You are right to worry about the impact on a newly planted groundcover from a herbicide, even one that is usually safe with broadleaf plants. New plantings can be sensitive to conditions that wouldn't normally hurt them. I listed Ornamec, Poast, Fusilade, Grass-be-Gone and Over the Top as among the available products. My suspicion is that the grass-specific spray won't hurt the jasmine even though it is newly planted, but here are some options to consider.

1) Review the label instructions carefully to see if application to newly planted groundcovers is covered. Follow the instructions provided. 2) Pull as much of the Bermuda grass as is reasonable by hand. In the situation that you describe you probably have long strands of Bermuda grass that can be pulled up relatively easily. The action will give the jasmine some more time to become established before experiencing the herbicide. 3) Experiment by spraying a small test plot to make sure that the herbicide does not hurt the newly planted Asiatic Jasmine. If the grass is killed and the jasmine in the test plot is not hurt after one more month, you can feel safe.

Q. We moved here two years ago. We have a white crape myrtle in our yard and there are crape myrtles with light pink flowers in the neighborhood. Is it like hydrangeas, the bloom color can be altered by acidifying the soil? Are all crape myrtles the same?

A. No, crape myrtles are available with a large number of different colored flowers and they stay that same color. In addition to being able to select the flower color you want; you can select the size of the plant that fits the available opening in your landscape. You can select your favorite color bloom and just the right size plant. For more information on the available varieties of crape myrtle, visit plantanswers.com. Your neighborhood nursery probably also has a list of the bloom colors and size of crape myrtles they carry. Plant crape myrtles in full sun.

Q. Our okra is already producing pods. Is there anything we can do with the oversize tough pods that we did not pick quick enough?

A. I would just throw them in the compost pile. They need to be removed to make room for the new pods that are tender and usable. Harvest the pods every 2 days and remove all over ripe pods.

Q. Tell us about daylilies. Our neighbor has offered us some bulbs this fall when he thins them out.

A. They are an excellent landscape plant that produces summer blooms and lush foliage that serves as an attractive groundcover. Grow them in full sun in well drained soil. They are drought tolerant and

relatively pest free. Slugs and snails can be controlled by available baits. Unfortunately, they are a favorite deer browse.

Q. We have Junegold peaches that are just ripening. They are large and attractive except for a knobby surface, is it a disease that we can prevent for next year?

A. It sounds like you are describing stink bug damage. They can be controlled if you spray every week from petal drop until harvest with malathion or Sevin. Follow label instructions.