

Time is near to apply crabgrass preventer to lawns

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The window for crabgrass prevention is slowly opening and will be wide open soon. If you have had crabgrass issues in your lawn in the past, pay attention to application timing.

Crabgrass is an annual grassy weed that loves to invade home lawns and especially thrive in areas of thin turf. It germinates in April in the Miami Valley when soil temperatures are around 52-54F for several days.

At this time, according to the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center Weather System report (go.osu.edu/oardcweather) the soil temperature at the Western Branch in South Charleston is 45.44F. The Piketon Branch (further south in Ohio) is 46.56F.

Therefore, overall crabgrass hasn't germinated in Ohio at this time. Keep in mind there may be areas around the state with microclimates that could have higher soil temperatures. Areas near the house or around sidewalks and drives heat up a little faster than in exposed wide open areas.



Crabgrass germinating in thin areas of turf.

The goal in applying crabgrass preventer is to keep crabgrass from growing. In addition, if you combine this with a fertilizer, you thicken up the lawn. Crabgrass had a more difficult time germinating and growing in a lawn with dense turf.

When applying crabgrass preventer, try to put it on the turf as close to crabgrass germination as possible. The reason is that you will get longer control. If you apply too early, control runs out eventually.

It's very possible for crabgrass to germinate again in August after a really good rain. If your crabgrass preventer has run out of steam and won't keep that late germination from happening.

There are post-emergent crabgrass control products (sprays) that can be used to treat this late germination if necessary. However, it's less work if you time your spring application appropriately.

An easy way to determine soil temperature is to use plants as predictors. The common plant indicator is forsythia. When the forsythia blooms drop it's time to apply crabgrass preventer.

At this time, in the northern Miami Valley, forsythias are just beginning to bloom. With the extended weather forecast for the next week, forsythias may be in bloom for a while longer.

I mentioned the link to the weather reports above. This is a great website to see historical data for weather around the state as well as current data such as soil temperatures. I use it frequently in my job.

On a final note, Ohio State University Extension and the Master Gardeners of Clark County are hosting the Garden Fling today. If you don't have anything to do and the weather stinks, why not come to Kenton Ridge High School in Springfield from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. today.

The cost is \$10.00 and is quite reasonable for a day of learning and garden-related vendors and food and fun!

For complete details of the event, go to go.osu.edu/letsyarden