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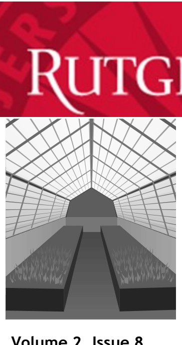

Rutgers Cooperative Extension
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Bumper Crop of Nutsedge!

By John Neyhart, Horticultural Consultant

Be it the weather we have had this year or an explosion in these perennial weeds it seems to dominate the calls to the office. Yellow Nutsedge (cyperus esculentus), Purple Nutsedge (Cyperus rotundus) and Kyllinga, Green and False Green (Kyllinga brevifolia and Kyllinga gracillimaare) are grass like sedges common in lawns and landscape beds. It tends to be found in patches because of the shallow fibrous root system that spreads by rhizomes some also produces many nut-like tubers. If this is not enough it will also spreads by seeds.

Yellow Nutsedge on sandtrap

Yellow Nutsedge

Identification:

Yellow Nutsedges
http://turfid.ncsu.edu/csPagedPdField.aspx?PlantID=CYPES
Long Tapered leaf tip, Seed head yellow, Tubers single at tips of rhizomes, Emerges early, Leaves light green, 12 to 16 inches tall when mature.

Purple Nutsedges
http://turfid.ncsu.edu/csPagedPdField.aspx?PlantID=CYPRO
Leaves taper abruptly to a blunt point, Seed head purple, Tubers connected in chains on rhizomes, Emerges later, Leaves darker green, Usually under 6 inches when mature

Green Kyllinga and False Green Kyllinga
http://turfid.ncsu.edu/csPagedPdField.aspx?PlantID=KYLSS

Both these sedges are very similar in appearance, native to Asia and are spreading rapidly in turfgrasses in the southern United States. tend to have a finer leaf texture and be shorter growing than other sedges. They do best under close mowing situations (inch or less) and in areas that are poorly drained, mat-forming sedges.

Control:

For cultural controls and chemical controls see:
Yellow Nutsedge Control in Landscape Turf FS543
http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS543

Nutsedge HGIC 2312
http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/pests/pdf/hgic2312.pdf

Nutsedge and Kyllinga Species W260
http://www.tennesseeturfgrassweeds.org/admin/Lists/Fact%20Sheets/Attachments/23/W260%20Nutsedge.pdf

Why so much crabgrass this year?

Crabgrass on home lawn

Goosegrass on tee

Crabgrass (Digitaria spp.) left and Goosegrass (Eleusine indica) right are common introduced weeds in North America. It is hard to believe crabgrasses were grown for food long before it was considered a weed! In 1849 the US patent office introduced large crabgrass as a forage crop. (Mitich, 1988)

Enough history, the fact is on average a full size crabgrass plant can produce 150,000 to 180,000 seeds. These seeds remain viable in the soil for many years. Crabgrass seeds start to germinate in the spring after five to seven days of soil temperatures at about 60 degrees F. Crabgrass will continue to germinate until late summer. Goosegrass is very similar needing slightly warmer temperatures, germinating from late May through the summer.

With this information, and our typical control program of applying a pre-emergent in the early spring, coupled with an extremely wet season has resulted in "breakthrough" of crabgrass. At this point in time mechanical post emergent control is probably your best option. It is also a good time to evaluate your sites for the future. First a healthy dense turf is best, correct problem areas and seed with a quality turf grass. Look at your control methods for next year, consider recommendations for split applications of pre emergence herbicides and or post emergent control options.
Please refer to Dr. Hart's fact sheet Crabgrass and Goosegrass Control in Cool Season Turfgrass http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=E233

The Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Days on July 30 and 31 2013 had herbicide evaluation trials (synthetic and organic products). Look for more information on this at the **Green Exhibition December 10-12, 2013 at the Trump Taj Mahal Hotel Casino in Atlantic City.**

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