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Spring Weed Control in Lawns and Landscapes

Kai Umeda, University of Arizona

This winter weed season started early when the October 2018 rains germinated the seeds of the grasses and broadleaved weeds. Throughout the remainder of the winter and up to now, we had plenty of timely rains to continuously germinate more weeds such as cheeseweed (*Malva* spp.), common groundsel (*Senecio* spp.), stork's bill or common filaree (*Erodium* spp.), red brome (*Bromus rubens*), London rocket (*Sisymbrio irio*), shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*), sowthistle (*Sonchus* spp.), etc.

Most of these weeds are now past flowering and are setting seed for next year and beyond. If left uncontrolled through the winter, many of these weeds have grown to 3 to 4 feet tall to create a jungle. In non-landscaped areas, the best options are to use a bush hog, sicklebar mower, or other rotary mower to knockdown the unsightly weeds or if the area is small, hoe and chop them down. If a postemergence herbicide might seem easier, it would be a waste of time and money because the weeds will drop their seeds to add to the future seed bank and if chemically controlled, the unsightly standing carcasses of the weeds would still have to be physically removed.

In turf areas, the maturing weeds will be difficult to control chemically so mowing low and frequently will stress and eliminate the weeds. In winter overseeded turf, now is the time to start lowering the mowing height to allow the bermudagrass sunlight and space to compete against the ryegrass.



A good size to effectively control *Malva* with a postemergence herbicide.

In landscaped areas with desirable ornamental shrubs, flowering bedding plants, or trees, hoeing or hand-pulling are the few options to remove the unsightly weeds. For xeriscaped areas with decomposed granite or other mulch materials, weed whacking with string trimmers can efficiently knockdown and remove weeds.

The use of postemergence herbicides is discouraged this late in the season because most product labels state that weeds should be treated at a small growth stage usually under 4 to 6 inches in height. Bigger weeds require a higher dose to be effective because the weed is hardened and toughened compared to being lush and susceptible when young and small. The use of even the higher rate of herbicide will not guarantee that the toughened weeds will be controlled.

Going forward, lawns should be managed through the summer to promote health and vigor to prepare for next winter's overseeding or non-overseeded turf. In landscapes, irrigation systems should be maintained to prevent leaks and excessive wet spots conducive for growing weeds. Following each rain event next winter, be prepared to control emerging weeds with a hoe or chemically with timely postemergence herbicides.

If you have any questions, please contact **Kai Umeda**, Extension Agent, Turf. Email: kumeda@cals.arizona.edu

For more information, please visit: <https://turf.arizona.edu>



Optimum size of a sowthistle seedling to be treated with a postemergence herbicide.

Webinars and Events

Please join in for the [2019 All Bugs Good and Bad Webinar Series](#). This webinar series provides information about good and bad insects. Webinars are free and open to everyone. Webinars will be on the **first Friday of each month at 2 p.m. Eastern time.**

Upcoming webinars include:

1. SSSSnakes, Identification and Environmental Importance – April 5, 2019
<https://learn.extension.org/events/3593>

2. The Ins and Outs of Termite Treatments – May 3, 2019

<https://learn.extension.org/events/3595>

3. Batty for Bats – June 7, 2019

<https://learn.extension.org/events/3596>

For more information about upcoming and past School IPM webinars:

<https://articles.extension.org/pages/74786/2019-all-bugs-good-and-bad-webinar-series>

Save the Date: April 24, Wednesday, 7:30am - 5:00 pm. [2nd Arizona School IPM Conference](#). Carl Hayden Community High School, Building 1200 (Auditorium). 3333 W. Roosevelt St, Phoenix, AZ.

The Arizona School IPM Conference will be a great occasion for maintenance and operations staff, administrative staff, grounds and landscape managers, teachers, nurses, parents, persons working in similar environments such as childcare, elder, disabled or medical facilities, and pest control technicians to network and gain insights into the importance of integrated pest management in schools and childcare facilities, how a school IPM program works, and the role that each individual plays in its success.

There will be separate tracks for indoor and outdoor environments. Listen to talks by experts on various aspects of school IPM, share your experiences and questions with your peers, discuss strategies and find solutions to pest issues your school is facing. Give feedback on topics you would like to see in future events.

Pesticide applicator licensees can earn 7 CEUs from the AZ Dept. of Ag., Division of Pest Management (formerly OPM) for attending the entire conference. Please make sure to bring your License Number to the venue.

For program and registration please visit:

<https://cals.arizona.edu/apmc/ArizonaSchoolIPMConference.html>

Save the Date: May 31, Friday, 7:15 am - 4:00 pm. [27th Annual Desert Horticulture Conference](#). JW Marriott Starr Pass, 3800 W Starr Pass, Tucson, AZ 85745.

The Desert Horticulture Conference is the premier annual conference for all members of the southwest green industry: landscape architects, designers, growers, retailers, contractors, maintenance personnel, suppliers, and educators. Presenting timely and research-based information relevant for designing, building, maintaining, and producing plants for urban landscapes in the arid Southwest. Online registration opens mid-March.

For more information about the EPA Schools program, visit:
<http://www.epa.gov/schools/>

For more information about Community IPM, visit:
<http://www.extension.org/pages/23359/urban-integrated-pest-management-community-page>



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To view all our previous newsletters, visit:

<https://cals.arizona.edu/apmc/public-health-IPM.html#newsletter>

<https://cals.arizona.edu/apmc/westernschoolIPM.html#newsletter>

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