

NOTES

BENEDICT'S HOME & GARDEN

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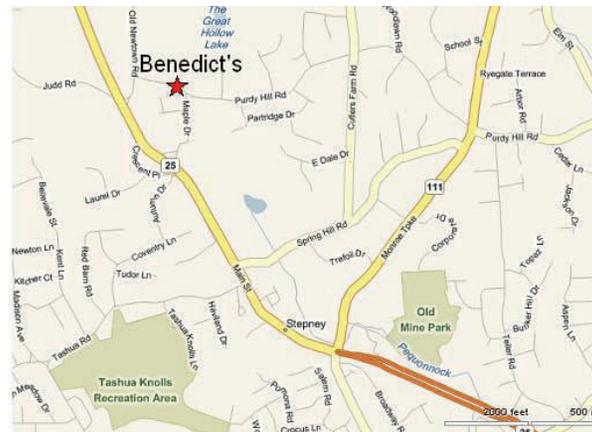
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Controlling Crabgrass



BENEDICT'S
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Brands you trust. People who know.



Just what is crabgrass?

Crabgrass (*Digitaria sanguinalis*) is one of the most troublesome weeds in yards throughout the United States. Although most gardeners know it as a lawn weed, it is also frequently found in flower and vegetable gardens and in cracks in sidewalks and driveways. This annual grassy weed grows in most soils but prefers light, sandy areas and is most troublesome in hot, dry weather. It grows especially well in lawns that are watered lightly, underfertilized, poorly drained, and growing thinly. One crabgrass plant can release well over 100,000 seeds in a season, so leaving even one plant uncontrolled can cause your entire lawn to be overrun by the weed by the next year.

So what can I do about it?

There are a number of options for controlling or killing crabgrass in your lawn, and limited choices for control in your flower or vegetable gardens. For lawns, the best course of action would be to apply a pre-emergent crabgrass preventer near the beginning of Spring, such as Scott's Halts Crabgrass Preventer. This product comes in a granular form either on its own or mixed with fertilizer as the Step 1 to the Scott's Four Step program. As a rule of thumb, the best time to apply this product is two weeks before the last expected frost, or around the time that forsythia and crabapple come into bloom.

Tupersan is another granular crabgrass preventer that can be used when spreading new grass seed. You can use it in the Spring when overseeding, or anytime of year when you need to put down new seed and do not want crabgrass to invade the area.

What if I could not apply a pre-emergent?

If you were not able to put a pre-emergent down, or did and still have some crabgrass growing in your yard, you can also use a crabgrass killer, which can come in either a spray or granular form. Bonide has a very good crabgrass killing spray called Bonide MSMA Crabgrass Killer; this comes in concentrated form which can be mixed in a tank sprayer for easy application. Ortho and Bayer also put out crabgrass killers in concentrated liquid form.

As for granular crabgrass killers, Preen has a product that prevents and kills crabgrass that comes in a 17lb bag that covers 5,000 square feet. Another product is called Team; this will prevent crabgrass from germinating, and will also kill crabgrass only when it is still very young; it will not work on large, established patches of crabgrass.



What about in flower or vegetable gardens?

As for flower or vegetable gardens, your options are very limited. Because crabgrass killers can damage your desirable plants, and because they will grow in such close proximity to one another, using a crabgrass killer is generally a bad idea. It is possible to use Roundup Weed and Grass Killer, but since it will kill your other plants you must use great caution when applying, especially on a windy day. You can also use Preen weed preventer for gardens, but since it is only a preventer you should apply it before any weeds have germinated. You need to be especially careful in a vegetable garden and read the label on any product you purchase, as they may be toxic to your plants and you may not be able to eat them if they become contaminated.



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