

## **Extension Notes**

Personal Column for October 21, 2009

By Gary Hall, ISU Regional Extension Education Director

### **Control Weeds This Fall**

October to early November is one of the best times to control some weeds. Use herbicides for thistle control and to kill winter annuals when the seedling plants are small and the plant has not had time to store much energy in the root system.

#### **Thistles**

Several herbicides are effective and recommended for thistle control. One of the newer herbicides, Milestone, is effective. Other effective herbicides are Tordon 22K and Grazon but these can also kill woody plants, including trees.

2, 4-D also works well while it is warm but for better thistle control use a smaller amount of 2, 4-D with a small amount of dicamba to the mix.

Other herbicides to control thistles also help like Redeem, Ally and Curtail.

#### **Winter Annuals**

Timing is not critical with control of winter annual weeds, so there is an extended window to apply herbicides after harvest in most years. Best control will be achieved if daytime temperatures are above 60 degrees, but good control can be obtained even when temperatures are in the 50s most years.

Winter annual broadleaf weeds such as henbit, marestalk and mustards, such as field pennycress, shepherds purse, tansy mustard, blue mustard, etc., germinate in the fall, overwinter as a green plant, begin growing again in early spring, then complete their life cycle and go to seed in the spring or early summer.

Too often, farmers and/or homeowners wait until spring to attempt control of winter annual weeds. Unfortunately, several factors are working against you in the spring. In the early spring, the weather is more unpredictable. It can be warm one day and cold the next.

Second, is the growth stage of winter annual weeds. In the spring, winter annuals are in the reproductive mode. They bolt quickly, flower and before you know it, they are setting seed. The plant is larger with a more developed root system and is flowering, so is less likely to receive a lethal dose of herbicide from your application.

In the fall, the weather usually is more cooperative and weeds are in the rosette, or vegetative stage and more susceptible to herbicides. Winter annuals can typically be sprayed

from late September to early December, weather permitting. As far as rates are concerned, fall applications typically require less herbicide and thus are less expensive.

The common winter annuals can be readily controlled with the following products:

-- Crop production field applications: 1.5 to 2 pints of 2,4-D ester per acre ; 1 pint 2,4-D and 4 ounces dicamba per acre; 24 ounces of glyphosate per acre; 1 pint 2,4-D and 16 ounces glyphosate per acre.

-- Home lawn applications: selective, 3-way products, such as Trimec, Triamine or Ortho Weed-B-Gon, containing herbicides like 2, 4-D, dicamba and MCPP.

No matter what weed killer you use, be sure to read and follow label instructions and always follow label rates.

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