

Backyard Bulletin

by OSU Extension Agent
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Begin Renovating Next Year's Lawn Now . . .

If a planting of zoysiagrass, bermudagrass or other warm-season turf is planned for next year into an area that currently contains living but undesirable bermudagrass, then renovation of the area should already be well underway. The August-early October time period is typically an excellent time to kill out the existing undesirable bermudagrass variety with applications of products that contain glyphosate. While ideally this process should have been started by late August or early September, in most years an early October application remains largely effective in obtaining substantial kill of bermudagrass in areas to be renovated the following year.

Glyphosate is the active ingredient in non-selective herbicides such as Roundup, Roundup Pro, Eraser or Kleen-out. Glyphosate is one of the most cost-effective non-selective herbicides for control of perennial grasses including bermudagrass. The reason that the late summer or early fall application is useful is believed to be due to the very effective translocation of the product through the shoot system to the roots and subterranean crowns (rhizomes) at this time of year. Although achieving 100% control from a single application in 2007 is not realistic, these late summer/early fall applications are often some of the most effective of the year.

The applications should be made while daytime highs are still in the 80s and nighttime lows are not dipping below 60. For glyphosate-containing products that are typically 41% active ingredient, the labels often call for a 5-quart per acre (3.7 fl oz per 1,000 square feet) application rate to the bermudagrass. This can also be achieved using a 2% solution of the product in water and spraying to the point of complete canopy coverage but not to the point of the spray solution dripping off the grass canopy. Read and follow all label directions. One must make sure that the product they are planning to use is intended to be used for this purpose. Special attention must be given to the carrier rate of water used to apply the herbicide, whether any wetting agent or surfactant must be added to your specific mix, wind speed and proximity to sensitive plants. Glyphosate usually injures, or in some cases kills, green tissue that it comes in contact with so drifting the spray onto desirable plants close by is not wise and is prohibited. Observe all precautions for the use of protective clothing such as long sleeves, trousers, chemical resistant gloves, eye protection and chemical resistant boots.

Glyphosate is not active in the soil. This means that it does not pose any hazard or potential injury to trees or other landscape plantings through root uptake, nor will it act as a pre-emergent herbicide against weeds that will germinate later. Uniform coverage and application to the target area is important. Another reminder; there is no better time spent than that spent to read and understand the entire product label.

Approximately 7 days after the glyphosate application, the treated area could be tilled, raked, re-leveled and seeded to a temporary erosion control grass cover such as annual or perennial ryegrass or even wheat for stabilization of the winter. OSU Fact Sheet [*HLA-6419*](#) covers detailed lawn establishment in Oklahoma, including temporary lawn establishment. In some instances, a simple mulch such as a clean wheat straw can be used for erosion control over the winter if crimped or tacked in place to keep it from blowing away.

In late April or early May of 2008, the area can be tilled or sprayed again and fallowed for an additional 2 to 3 week period to evaluate the success of the treatment in killing out existing bermudagrass. Usually there are some surviving rhizomes following this treatment that generate new bermudagrass plants in the spring. Rhizomes are underground creeping systems that serve as a resilient storage organ and means of vegetative propagation. Rhizomes contain thousands of dormant buds below the bermudagrass lawn surface. In hastily completed renovations, the homeowner often finds that the renovation was futile because an effective kill-out strategy was not executed. Ninety-nine percent (99%) control is not good enough. Anything short of absolute diligence towards eradication of the existing variety will result in a mix of the new turfgrass variety with plants of the previous variety. (*Source: Dennis Martin, OSU Extension Turfgrass Specialist*)

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