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Lawn Weeds: Yellow Nutsedge

One of the more commonly misidentified weeds in the home lawn is yellow nutsedge. Mistaken for a grass, yellow nutsedge has the typical triangular stems that place it in the sedge family. Leaves come off all three sides of the plant rather than on two sides like grasses.

Yellow nutsedge will also tend to be a pale green color as compared to the darker green most of our turf grasses exhibit. It will also tend to grow more rapidly than typical turf grass species and thrives under ample rainfall and/or irrigation.

Because of its tuberous root system, nutsedge is a tough one to control! Pulling actually activates dormant tubers, increasing the numbers of plants over where you started! If pulling is your control method, it will likely take more than one season of persistent removal.

As with many weeds, nutsedge is less competitive in a dense, healthy lawn than in an open, poor lawn, particularly if drainage is an issue. In those cases, herbicide applications may be in order. Several herbicides are available for nutsedge control. The active ingredient halosulfuron is found in SedgeHammer and Hi-Yield Nutsedge & Horsetail Control. Plan to apply after the nutsedge has reached the three- to eight-leaf stage to help improve translocation of the active ingredient to the underground tubers and rhizomes. Products with the active ingredient sulfentrazone (Bonide Sedge Ender, Ortho Nutsedge Killer and Spectracide Weed Stop for Lawns Plus Crabgrass Killer) are also effective.

Plan for a first application before the third week of June. Later applications may stimulate growth of additional tubers.

Shade Tree Diseases: Anthracnose

This spring's cool/wet weather has spurred a number of cases of anthracnose. We are starting to see anthracnose on sycamore. Anthracnose is a fungal disease that results in young leaves withering and turning black. On older leaves, look for brown areas that follow the major veins of the leaves. In some cases, the petiole (leaf stem) is infected, which causes leaf drop. The leaf may look perfectly fine, so look for browned areas on the petiole.

In severe cases, the tree drops heavily infected leaves and may be completely defoliated. Fortunately, healthy trees will leaf out again in a few weeks. Defoliation this early in the year does not affect overall tree health and trees should have plenty of time to produce new leaves and make the energy reserves needed to survive the winter.

Sycamore is the most commonly affected species, but others may be hurt as well. Since it seldom causes significant damage, chemical controls are usually unnecessary. Fungicides do not cure infected leaves. Applying fungicides now will not help.