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Happy Labor Day

State Fair and Crabgrass, both celebrations this time of year.

That time of year, when all you thought you had to worry about was preparing your kids for the new school season, you also have that daunting list that you have put off all summer. Seal coating the driveway, staining the deck, landscaping the backyard, fixing the fence and killing the pesky crabgrass. The first items may need the assistance of a neighbor or two, but the last one is being taken care of by mother-nature. Take a breath, grab the kids and like thousands of Minnesotans go and enjoy the annual state fair. While you are enjoying bacon on a stick, corn dogs, and miles of walking your lawn at home is going through a yearly ritual.

The lifecycle of Crabgrass

Fall is around the corner and much like your garden, your trees and annuals so too is crabgrass coming to an end. Will it be back next spring?? NO. Crabgrass is classified as an annual. In one season it will germinate from seed, grow to a full adult, produce seed and perish.



Enough for the details, how do I kill it. Understanding the lifecycle gives us a road map in how to treat this pesky plant. Knowing that what ever we saw on our lawns last year, we can be reassured that we will get it in the same spot next

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year. In the spring, we can use a fertilizer with a pre emergent herbicide labled for crabgrass prevention, on the areas that were hit hard last season. This pre emergent actually embeds itself in the top layer of the soil profile. When new plants begin to emerge the chemical layers itself on the new plant and kills it in its tracks. The key to making this program work is timing. It must be applied before the soil temps hit 50 degrees. The greatest thing about the pre emergent is the fact that it stays active for about 100 days. So if you apply it April 15th it will still be there well into June. By that time your more attractive turf will have the opportunity to fill in and become competitive with any invasive weeds. Controlling crabgrass on a more cultural basis is more difficult, but achievable. Fertilizing late in the season is much more beneficial to your grass then the crabgrass that is already in its death cycle. Avoid heavy fertilization during the hot summer months when crabgrass is most active. During the cool spring weeks, water heavy with infrequent intervals (once a week). Crabgrass has very shallow roots and can only survive on water in the top 2 inches. Bluegrass can have roots up to 8 inches long and can out compete crabgrass in the search for water. Crabgrass may have won the battle this year, but next year is all new. For now enjoy your corndog at the Minnesota State Fair and know that your crabgrass is taking the long walk off of the short plank.

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Happy Writing
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