



WEEDY GRASSES

QUACKGRASS (*Agropyron repens*)**Description**

Perennial weedy grass 1-2 feet tall with hollow stems, wheat-like spikes and bluish-green leaf blades which are rough on the upper surface. Spikes produce seed from May to September. Quackgrass spreads rapidly by coarse, yellow-white underground stems called rhizomes (some grow as long as 5 feet).

Habitat

Quackgrass can tolerate any type of soil. It is very competitive and will crowd out desirable plants. Commonly found in lawns, shrub and flowerbeds.

Control

Quackgrass is difficult to eradicate. Digging and carefully removing all rhizomes will effectively eliminate single plants and small infestations. However, this can be time-consuming and frustrating since any root pieces left behind will generate new plants. Black plastic is not totally effective as rhizomes spread under plastic and strong stems can break through plastic. Seeds can survive in soil up to 4 years, although most germinate in spring within 2 years. Glyphosate products should be applied as spot treatments only! The nonselective herbicide glyphosate will kill actively growing quackgrass with, but also desirable plants, such as turf or vegetation in garden beds. Follow label directions carefully. Use pre-emergent herbicides in flower and shrub beds during early spring, two weeks before the last killing frost is expected.

CRABGRASS (*Digitaria sanguinalis*)**Description**

Pale green annual. Blades are short (2-5 inches long), 1/3 inch wide, slightly hairy and tapered to a point. As the plant matures, 3 finger-like seedheads take on a purplish color and produce thousands of seeds. Crabgrass can also spread by rooting at the lower stem joints. It grows rapidly through the summer (June-October), forming broad, dense, flat clumps that smother the turf.

Habitat

Crabgrass grows best in hot, dry weather and will grow in any soil preferring light, sandy areas. It sprouts from seed in the early spring after lying dormant during the winter. A hard frost kills the plants in the fall.

Control

Cultivation (rototilling or hoeing) will effectively eliminate plants. Try to prevent it from sprouting by applying a crabgrass pre-emergent herbicide in early spring before the seeds germinate (February-April, before temperatures are regularly in the 80s). Use an herbicide-only product, or apply an herbicide combined with fertilizer.

BENTGRASS (*Agrostis* species)

Description

Low-growing, grayish-green perennial. Spreads by slender, creeping stolons and often forms extensive dense patches. Seedheads would not be seen on frequently mown lawns. Blades are narrow, flat and taper to a sharp point.

Habitat

Bentgrass is used primarily on putting greens and in lawns in the Seattle area. It is cut very short, $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, as opposed to bluegrass lawns that are cut at $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 inches. If it is not cut shorter than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, bentgrass becomes matted and straggly. It is very invasive and will crowd out other grasses. It is shallow-rooted and will not survive in dry soils.



Control

Kill out while actively growing in the late summer to early fall using the herbicide glyphosate. Be careful during application, as glyphosate will kill any other grasses and plants it contacts.

Skip a mowing to allow grass to form enough green leaf tissue to absorb the chemical. Spray an area at least a foot larger than the bentgrass patch to insure control. Let this area die back for 2 weeks. Remove dead grass. Rake soil and water well. Let weeds and weedy grasses germinate and hoe out or spray again. Then reseed or lay sod.

ANNUAL BLUEGRASS (*Poa annua*)

Description

Low-growing annual. Light apple green with hundreds of whitish-green seed heads at any mowing height. Blades are weak and have a boat-shaped tip. They are short, narrow and smooth. Annual bluegrass may persist as a perennial if summers are mild and moist.

Habitat

Annual bluegrass thrives in lawns, gardens, cultivated crops, roadsides, and other open spaces. It can be especially damaging in lawns, where it grows somewhat faster than other grasses and dies once it reaches maturity, resulting in undesirable brown spots in the lawn. It is commonly discovered as an impurity of lawn grass seed.

Annual bluegrass germinates in the fall and is established before cold weather. It grows vigorously through mild winters and early springs. Annual bluegrass likes cool, moist weather, damp shady locations, and moist, rich, compacted soils. It grows rapidly in the spring, especially if fertilized. It is most serious in compacted soils.

Control

Careful digging is useful to manage weed populations. However, digging can carry undesirable weed seed to the surface and foster further germination. Prevent seeds from germinating by applying a pre-emergent herbicide in early to mid-fall. Apply again in mid-March to mid-April. Core aerate before application.

Cultivation (rototilling or hoeing) will effectively eliminate plants. Hand-pull to eliminate weeds in a small infestation.

Maintaining a healthy planting or turf area to provide competition will prevent weed establishment. Water deeply and infrequently.

