

**Problem:** Crabgrass (*Digitaria* sp.)



**Description:** Crabgrass is a summer annual grass that germinates in the spring and dies in the fall. It proliferates in hot, dry environments. Because cool-season lawns struggle during the summer, crabgrass will often take over if the lawn is not well taken care of.

**Recommendations:** For most of Kansas, crabgrass typically begins to germinate around May 1. Therefore, April 15 is a good target date for applying the preventer because it gives the active ingredients time to evenly disperse in the soil before crabgrass germination starts. The April 15 target works well for the central part of the state longitudinally, but April 1 may be more appropriate for southern Kansas and May 1 for northern Kansas. Additionally, weather varies from one spring to the next, and with it the timing of crabgrass germination. For this reason, it is often better to base timing on the bloom of ornamental plants. The eastern redbud tree is a good choice for this purpose. When the trees in your area are approaching full-bloom, apply crabgrass preventer. A follow-up application will be needed about 8 weeks later unless you are using Dimension (dithiopyr) or Barricade (proflam), each of which will provide season long control. The label will list the active ingredient such as dithiopyr or proflam.

Control of crabgrass after it has emerged is more difficult but products containing quinclorac (Fertilome Weed-Out with Crabgrass Killer, Ortho Weed-B-Gon Plus Crabgrass Control, BioAdvanced All-in-One Lawn Weed and Crabgrass Killer, Monterey Crab-E-Rad Plus, Drive, others) are usually effective. Clippings from lawns treated with quinclorac should be returned to the lawn or discarded. Do not use clippings to mulch vegetable or flower gardens as they can harm garden crops.

**References:**

1. [Control of Crabgrass in Home Lawns](#), Purdue University and University of Illinois Extension Publication AY-10-W and IL-IN TW 33

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