

# Horticulture 2019 Newsletter

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1712 Claflin, 2021 Throckmorton Plant Science Cntr.  
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Video of the Week: [Dividing Daylilies](#)

## TURFGRASS

### For Seeding Success, Pay Attention to "Other Crop" on the Seed Label

LOT # L155M-9-TF-499			
PURE SEED	KIND	GERM	ORIGIN
24.95 %	2ND MILLENNIUM TALL FESCUE	90 %	OR
19.83 %	FOCUS TALL FESCUE	90 %	OR
19.78 %	OLYMPIC GOLD TALL FESCUE	90 %	OR
19.65 %	APACHE 3 TALL FESCUE	90 %	OR
14.84 %	BLADE RUNNER TALL FESCUE	90 %	OR
0.00 %	OTHER CROP		
0.95 %	INERT MATTER		
0.00 %	WEED SEED		
NOXIOUS WEED: NONE FOUND		NET WT. 50 LBS	TEST DATE: 1/2009

Fall planting time is close at hand, so it's time to talk about grass seed. Many people have the idea that all grass seed is basically the same. Big mistake! Choosing quality seed is one of the most important steps in successfully planting or overseeding your lawn. If you don't know what to look for, you may be introducing unwanted intruders into that new

stand. In particular, we are concerned with seed contaminated with orchardgrass and/or rough bluegrass (also known by its Latin name, *Poa trivialis*, or *Poa triv* for short). These are both perennial grassy weeds that cannot be selectively controlled once they are in a lawn.

Orchardgrass is a problem because it is faster growing and lighter green than our turfgrasses. It is a bunch grass and so doesn't spread, but infested areas are still unsightly due to small tufts of this species pockmarking the lawn.

Rough bluegrass is fine-textured and forms circular patches in the lawn. It blends in fairly well until summertime heat causes it to turn brown rapidly. If the rough bluegrass would just die in the heat, it would only be a temporary problem. Unfortunately, it usually just goes dormant, turning green again with cooler temperatures and rain.

Buying quality seed starts with knowing how to decipher the seed label. One of the most important things to look for is listed as percent "Other Crop Seed" or "Other Crop." "Other crop" refers to any species that is intentionally grown for some purpose. That would include turfgrasses (those species other than the one you are buying) and pasture grasses.

Orchardgrass and rough bluegrass both are listed as "Other Crop" seed. Seed labels are required by law to show the percentage (by weight) of "Other Crop Seed" in the bag, but unless a species constitutes 5% or more, the label doesn't have to list each species by name.

How much "Other Crop" is too much? That's a difficult question to answer, but the tolerance is very low. It depends on what the "Other Crop" actually is, and the quality expectations of the buyer. In practice, "Other Crop" may refer to something relatively harmless, like a small amount of perennial ryegrass in a bag of tall fescue, or it may refer to something bad, like rough bluegrass or orchardgrass. The homeowner really has no easy way of knowing what the "Other Crop" is, although there are some hints. If it is something bad, less than 1/2 of 1% can ruin a bag of seed. Obviously, if your expectations are high for the area you are planting, you would want

the "Other Crop" to be as close to zero as possible. Good quality seed will often have 0.01% "Other Crop Seed" or less.

Another line on the seed label is "Weed Seed." It should also be 0.01% or less. (Ward Upham)

## ORNAMENTALS

### Spring Flowering Shrubs



August through September is the time period our spring-flowering shrubs set flower buds. Therefore, watering, as needed, at this time can help with next spring's bloom. Also avoid pruning at this time of year as it can reduce bloom for next spring.

Examples of spring-flowering shrubs include Forsythia, Flowering Quince, Almond, Beautybush, Deutzia, Pyracantha, Lilac, Mock Orange, Cotoneaster, Weigela,

Viburnum and Witchhazel. (Ward Upham)

### Are Crabapples Safe to Eat?



Crabapples are safe to consume as long as you don't eat too many of them. Actually, the only difference between crabapples and apples is the size of the fruit. By definition, crabapples have fruit that are 2 inches or less in diameter, and apples are more than 2 inches in diameter. By this definition, most of the apples grown from seed will be crabapples. The fruiting apples are grafted.

Did people ever plant crabapples from seed? Of course they did. Just think of Johnny Appleseed. But those apples were normally used for jelly, applesauce, and cider and not for fresh eating.

There is one other caveat with using crabapples from a tree in the landscape. Make sure the tree hasn't been sprayed as an ornamental with a pesticide that isn't labeled for fruit tree apples. If it has, then the fruit should not be used. (Ward Upham)

## FLOWERS

### Dividing Daylilies

Daylilies need to be divided every three to four years to maintain good flower production. Though they may be divided in early spring before growth starts, it is more common to divide them at this time of year. Many gardeners cut back the tops to about half their original height to make plants easier to handle.



Daylilies have a very tough root system that can make them difficult to divide while in place. Dividing in place is practical if it hasn't been long since the last division. In such cases, a spading fork can be used to peel fans from the existing clump. If the plants have been in place longer and are well grown together, it is more practical to divide them after the entire clump has been dug.

Use a spade to lift the entire clump out of the ground. Although it is possible to cut the clump apart with a sharp spade, you'll save more roots by using two spading forks back-to-back to divide the clump into sections. Each section should be about the size of a head of cauliflower. An easier method involves using a stream of water from a garden hose to wash the soil from the clump, and then rolling the clump back and forth until the individual divisions separate. Space divisions 24 to 30 inches apart, and set each at its original depth. The number of flowers will be reduced the first year after division but will return to normal until the plants need to be divided again. (Ward Upham)

## PESTS

### Cicada Killer Wasps



These large (1-1/3- to 1-5/8-inch long) wasps fly slowly above the ground. Cicada killers have a black body with yellow marks across the thorax and abdomen. Wings are reddish-orange.

Although these wasps are huge, they usually ignore people. Males may act aggressively if they are threatened, but are unable to sting. Females can sting, but are so passive that they rarely do. Even if they do sting, the pain is less than that of smaller wasps such as the yellow jacket or paper wasp and is similar to the sting of a sweat bee.

The cicada killer is a solitary wasp rather than a social wasp like the yellow jacket. The female nests in burrows in the ground. These burrows are quarter-size in diameter and can go 6 inches straight down and another 6 inches horizontally. Adults normally live 60 to 75 days from mid-July to mid-September and feed on flower nectar and sap. The adult female seeks cicadas on the trunks and lower limbs of trees. She stings her prey, flips it over, straddles it and carries it to her burrow. If she has a tree to climb, she will climb the tree so they can get airborne and fly with cicada back to the nest. If not, she will drag it. She will lay one egg per cicada if the egg is left unfertilized. Unfertilized eggs develop into males only. Fertilized eggs develop into females and are given at least two cicadas. Cicadas are then stuffed into the female's burrow. Each burrow normally has three to four cells with one to two cicadas in each. However, it is possible for one burrow to have 10 to 20 cells.

Eggs hatch in two to three days, and larvae begin feeding on paralyzed cicadas. Feeding continues for four to 10 days until only the outer shell of the cicada remains. The larva overwinters inside a silken case. Pupation occurs in the spring. There is one generation per year. Cicada killers are not dangerous, but they can be a nuisance. If you believe control is necessary, treat the burrows after dark to ensure the female wasps are in their nests. The males normally roost on plants near burrow sites. They can be captured with an insect net or knocked out of the air with a tennis racket during the day. Permethrin may be used for control. Products with permethrin include the following.

## Dusts

Eight Garden Dust - Bonide  
Multipurpose Garden and Pet Dust - Green Thumb  
Garden, Pet & Livestock Dust - Hi-Yield

## Liquids

38 Plus Turf, Termite & Ornamental Insect Spray - Hi-Yield  
Eight Vegetable, Fruit & Flower Conc. - Bonide  
Eight Yard & Garden RTS - Bonide  
Lawn, Garden, Pet, & Livestock Insect Spray - Hi-Yield

(Ward Upham)

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