

Removal of a Cool Season Turfgrass from Overseeded Residential and Commercial Lawns

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Selective removal of a cool season turfgrass such as ryegrass, from a warm season turfgrass stand in residential and/or commercial lawns can often be difficult. Some of the herbicides used to control ryegrass in a warm season turfgrass lawn (bermudagrass, buffalograss, St. Augustinegrass and Zoysiagrass) can cause injury to the desired warm season grasses and if you wait until the warm season turfgrass is completely dormant, temperatures may be too cool for the herbicide to work effectively. Outlined below are some options for killing ryegrass, as well as other cool season turfgrasses, out of an established warm season residential or commercial lawn.

Dormant Warm Season Turfgrass:

If the warm season turfgrass is completely dormant, then products containing glyphosate (Roundup®, Touchdown Pro®, numerous others) can be used to remove the ryegrass. The key is to make sure the warm season turfgrass being grown in the lawn is completely dormant. If the lawn is not dormant, then the application of the herbicide could cause serious damage to the lawn. Products containing glyphosate are readily available for homeowner use in most garden/retail stores.

Non-Dormant Warm Season Turfgrass:

There are several herbicides that can be used to remove ryegrass from a warm season turfgrass lawn area that is not dormant. Note, these products can also be used once the lawn is dormant. However, these products do not work well when temperatures drop below the 60 to 70° F range. The problem is that these products (herbicides) are not found in garden/retail stores and will have to be applied by a licensed pesticide applicator such as lawn care company and/or landscape company. Listed below

are a few of the sulfonylurea type herbicides that can be applied on either actively growing warm season grasses (green) or dormant warm season grasses (brown).

- 1) Revolver (formasulfuron) – this herbicide is labeled for use in bermudagrass or zoysiagrass growing in both residential and commercial lawns. This herbicide does a very good job of controlling ryegrass, but is very slow to work when temperatures are below 60 to 70° F.
- 2) Manor or Blade (metsulfuron) – both Manor or Blade can be used on bermudagrass, St. Augustinegrass or zoysiagrass growing in residential or commercial lawns.
- 3) Monument (trifloxysulfuron) – this herbicide can be used to control ryegrass in bermudagrass and zoysiagrass growing in both residential and commercial lawns.
- 4) Certainty (sulfosulfuron) – this herbicide can be safely used in bermudagrass, buffalograss, St. Augustinegrass and zoysiagrass growing in both commercial or residential lawns. Of the four herbicides listed, this has the least amount of activity on the ryegrass and it will probably take two applications of Certainty to completely control the ryegrass.

Summary:

Homeowners trying to control ryegrass in their warm season grass lawn are going to be limited to using glyphosate in most cases due to availability. It is going to be very important that the homeowner make sure the warm season turfgrass such as bermudagrass is completely dormant or injury may occur.

Homeowners or commercial property owners can also hire professional lawn care operators and/or professional landscapers to control the ryegrass with one of the new sulfonylurea type herbicides in both residential and commercial lawns. At this time, these new sulfonylurea herbicides are not available for sale in the garden/retail stores, thus making them harder for homeowners to purchase. While these herbicides can be used on both dormant and actively growing warm season turfgrasses, they are very slow to work once air temperatures drop down below the 60 to 70° F range.

Disclaimer: Please read the pesticide label prior to use. Trade names used herein are for convenience only; no endorsement of products is intended, nor is criticism of unnamed products implied.

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