



Even expert gardeners find it hard to know how to attack weeds in the lawn. To prevent weeds in the lawn it's important to keep your lawn in good health. This is done by feeding the lawn two to three times a year with a quality lawn fertiliser such as Oderings Lawn Replenish or Tui Lawn Force.

A guide to sprays

There are two types of weeds in the lawn:

- Broadleaf weeds, which do not look like a form of grass
- Grass weeds

To effectively get rid of these two types of weeds there are two types of sprays.

Selective herbicides remove some weed species but leave others unaffected; these types of sprays are often used on lawns to kill broadleaf weeds but not the grass. They will, however, kill other plants that they come into contact with through spray drift.

Non-selective herbicides will kill every plant they come into contact with; they kill the grass as well as broadleaf weeds and any other plants through spray drift. So the only way to kill grass weeds and not your lawn with this type of spray is to carefully spot-spray the weeds or, alternatively, cut them out.

Lawn weed guide

Follow this guide for easy identification of lawn weeds and once you know what weed you have, come in and see us to get the correct spray to eliminate the problem. If you're still not sure what you have, bring in a sample, and we'll point you to the correct solution.

Broadleaf weeds

When spraying for broadleaved weeds, use a selective herbicide. This will kill the weeds in the lawn but not the grass. These sprays will also kill plants in the garden that they come into contact with, so don't spray on a windy day.



Catsear – this is often confused with dandelion. It's a perennial weed with upright yellow flowers and its presence in the lawn often indicates that there is a lack of nutrients in the soil.



Chamomile – some people love it; and some hate it. Chamomile has fine needle-like leaves and white flowers.



Chickweed – with bright shiny leaves, distinctive hairy stems and small white flowers it grows best in cool, wet weather, and the seeds are easily spread by the wind.



Clover – this is a perennial weed that is low growing and found in most lawns. Regular watering in the summer months helps weaken the weed.



Creeping Oxalis – this oxalis is a hard-to-kill perennial weed with yellow flowers that thrives in New Zealand lawns. A regular spray program with a hydrocotyle spray is the best way to kill this weed.



Dandelions – this broadleaf perennial weed dies down in the winter and reappears in the spring. This is a fairly easy weed to eliminate, but more established dandelions may need a repeat application.



Daisy – this is a common weed that is easily identified by its white flower with a yellow centre. It prefers to grow in a damp shady lawn.



Dock – this weed has a large taproot and is difficult to kill. If the lawn is kept dense it makes it hard for the dock to establish. Repeated spraying with high-concentrate sprays may be needed to get rid of it.



Hydrocotyle – there are a number of different species all of which can cause a major problem in the lawn, especially since a lot of weed sprays won't kill hydrocotyle. Incorporating lime fertiliser once a year is essential and will help when incorporated with a spray program.



Moss, Algae, Liverwort, Lichens – the growth of these weeds is caused by the lawn being too wet, not having enough drainage, having too much shade or a combination of these factors. Sprays will kill the moss, but unless you remove the cause the moss will come back.



Onehunga Weed – Prickle Weed – onehunga is an annual weed with yellow flowers. Once they have flowered (in October generally) they have set their seed for next year. The only way to eventually eliminate this weed is to spray before they flower and then again in November for two years in a row.



Oxalis – this oxalis is a bulb and is hard to kill. The problem with oxalis is that once you spray it they drop their baby bulbs, which then start to grow. You must re-spray when you see the oxalis starting to reappear; otherwise, you are giving the baby bulbs time to get big and have more babies, which takes you back to where you started.



Thistles – these prickly customers are well known.



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Lawn Weeds



Grass weeds

Unfortunately since the weeds listed below are all classed as grass weeds the only control is a non-selective spray. Non-selective sprays will kill everything they come into contact with; therefore, you should only spot-spray your lawn unless you want to kill the whole thing! Alternatively there are gels you can use, simply apply the gel directly to the weed; you get no spray drift, no run off and it won't kill your surrounding plants.



Couch – you may also know couch as twitch, dog grass or summer grass. It will go dormant over the winter with the cold but will resurface in the warmer months.



Paspalum – a perennial grass that causes problems in lawns all over New Zealand especially in summer when it produces its large seed heads. Paspalum can easily grow to 30cm in lawns even when it has been mowed. It also grows best in the summer and becomes almost dormant in the winter. For the best results spray late spring and early summer. You definitely need repeat applications to kill this pesky weed.



Wireweed and Willow weed – these summer annual weeds are fast to establish in spring in wet soils. You will often find them establishing by paths or areas where damage is caused from walking. This weed is commonly also found near your veggie patch, so the best control is to dig it out while young.

