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Quackgrass vs Crabgrass

Each spring, we receive questions regarding an ugly, wide-bladed grass growing in lawns. Customers are mistakenly identifying this grass as crabgrass. It is a easy mistake to make because they look so similar, but this ugly grass is actually quackgrass, not crabgrass.

Quackgrass is a perennial grass that is one of the first grasses to come out of dormancy each spring. Many homeowners confuse this thick-bladed "junk grass" with crabgrass.

Quackgrass has a huge root system so pulling it out is not a long term solution. Because quackgrass is a variety of grass, there aren't chemical products available that know the difference between quackgrass and the other good varieties of grass in the lawn. Round-Up is good at controlling quackgrass, but applying it will also kill desirable grass around it.

We have heard of customers who have applied Round-Up in an interesting way. They will put a rubber glove on their hand with a cotton glove over the rubber glove. Then dip the gloved hand into Round-Up, and coat the quackgrass blades with the liquid. The Round-Up kills quackgrass roots and all in about 10 days.

Crabgrass is a summer annual. It is similar in appearance to quackgrass because it grows in clumps and faster than the grass around it. It germinates in mid-May and starts appearing in lawns in July. Our first lawn care application includes a crabgrass preventer which is our best defense against this unsightly grass. The second best thing to help prevent crabgrass is a high mowing height. We see less crabgrass in lawns that are mowed between 3 and 3.5 inches than lawns mowed below 3 inches.



Quackgrass in the spring.



Crabgrass in the summer.