

**The Extension Cord**  
*“Connecting K-State to the Community”*  
by Mark Ploger  
Pratt County Extension Agricultural Agent

**Controlling Yellow Nutsedge in Lawns**

We’ve been getting several inquiries in the Extension Office about this “weird” grass that seems to stick up above the other grass in the lawns across the area. It usually seems to grow a lot faster than the rest of the lawn. It is also very obvious after the lawn has been recently mowed for a couple of days.

This grass is known as yellow nutsedge is a relatively common problem in lawns, especially in wet years or in lawns with irrigation. Although sedges look much like a grass, they are different.

Unlike grasses, sedges have triangular stems, and the leaves are three-ranked instead of two-ranked, which means the leaves come off the stems in three different directions. Yellow nutsedge is pale green to yellow and grows rapidly in the spring and early summer. Because of this rapid shoot growth, it sticks up above the rest of the lawn only a few days after mowing. This weed is a good indicator of poor drainage, but it can be introduced into well-drained sites through contaminated topsoil or nursery stock. As with many weeds, nutsedge is less competitive in a dense, healthy lawn than in an open, poor lawn.

Nutsedge is difficult to control culturally because it produces numerous tubers that give rise to new plants. Pulling nutsedge will increase the number of plants because dormant tubers are activated. However, it is possible to control nutsedge by pulling, but you must be persistent. If you are, eventually the nutsedge will die out though this will likely take more than one season.

If you were going to treat with an herbicide, it would be better to leave the nutsedge plants undisturbed so the herbicide can be maximally translocated to the roots, rhizomes, and tubers. Several herbicides are available for nutsedge control.

SedgeHammer and Hi-Yield Nutsedge & Horsetail Control contain halosulfuron and are effective and safe products. The SedgeHammer label says to apply after the nutsedge has reached the three- to eight-leaf stage. Waiting until this growth stage apparently results in improved translocation of the active ingredient to the underground tubers and rhizomes.

Products with sulfentrazone such as Bonide Sedge Ender, Ortho Nutsedge Killer and Spectracide Weed Stop for Lawns Plus Crabgrass Killer are also effective.

Research has shown that the first application should go down by June 21. If the initial spray is after June 21, mature daughter tubers may be stimulated to grow.

*(Source: Ward Upham, K-State Extension Horticulture Rapid Response Center)*