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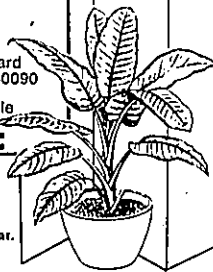
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## Root out pesky weeds before they appear

April is a prime time to control lawn weeds. One reason is that both crabgrass and broadleaved weeds are in growth stages that are very susceptible to chemical controls.

Another is that, after a long, dreary, Michigan winter, homeowners have a great deal of enthusiasm for working outdoors that they can take advantage of.

Michael Barrett, Cooperative Extension Service weed control specialist at Michigan State University, says the best time to do something about crabgrass in lawns is before you see it. Seeds germinate in late April or early May, he explains, and the most effective crabgrass controls must be applied before then.

Choose a product labeled for pre-emergence control of crabgrass, he advises. A material designed for spraying on after crabgrass comes up — a contact herbicide — will not be effective now. Likewise, a pre-emergence material applied after the plants come up won't do any good.

To be sure you're applying pre-emergence herbicides at the proper time, use the flowering of forsythia plants as your guide and put herbicides down around the time the plants begin to bloom.

"If you have had trouble with crabgrass before, there are seeds present that are waiting for proper soil temperatures and moisture to germinate,"

he says. "Seeds can hang around for five to seven years, so no crabgrass last year doesn't automatically mean no crabgrass this year."

IF CRABGRASS is an annual problem, some changes in the way you maintain your lawn might be called for. Crabgrass most often occurs in thin or spotty lawns. Thick, vigorously growing turf is the first line of defense.

The best time to control broadleaved weeds is in the fall, when many weed seeds are germinating, but early spring efforts can be very effective, Barrett says.

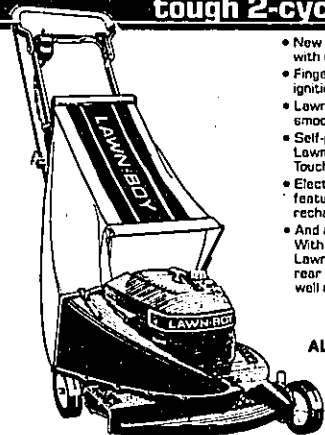
"Most herbicides work better on weeds before they flower," he observes. "Applying chemicals in the spring is like to catch many weeds while they're young and susceptible to control."

TO GET THE BEST results from contact herbicides, apply on a warm, sunny day when no rain is forecast for at least 12 hours. Use a product containing two or three kinds of chemicals, Barrett advises — this will control the greatest variety of lawn weeds.

When applying granulated herbicide or weed-and-feed materials, make sure you spread them evenly at the rate recommended on the label.

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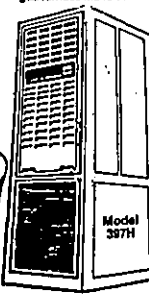
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