

# Crabgrass Prevention and Control

Crabgrass is the primary weed pest of lawns in the Mid-Atlantic region. Its spreading, aggressive growth habit crowds out the desirable grass in your lawn. It is a warm-season annual grass. While it germinates in spring, its most vigorous growth is on warm summer days. Favorable conditions for crabgrass seed germination include soil temperatures of 65°F or higher for several days, sunlight, and moisture.

Growth of crabgrass will slow or stop with cooler weather in the fall, but by then it may have crowded out the desirable grass. Since crabgrass is an annual weed, it will die with the first hard frost, leaving unsightly patches in the turf and enormous quantities of seed behind.

**PREVENTION:** The best way to rid lawns of crabgrass is to prevent the germination of seeds. This can be accomplished by higher mowing, which encourages lawn grasses to shade and prevent the germination of crabgrass seeds. Mow at the proper height for your grass type. Also, when properly fertilized in the spring and fall, a lawn stays deep green, dense, and vigorous, and is better able to resist the invasion of weeds.

**PRE-EMERGENTS:** A preventive application of a pre-emergent herbicide shortly before seeds germinate will go far toward ridding your lawn of this weed. Typically, pre-emergents must be applied at the end of March, before the crabgrass seed germinates. Pre-emergents must be lightly watered in immediately after application. A delay of even an hour will reduce the effectiveness of the product. The soil should not be disturbed after the herbicide is applied because it will disrupt the coverage in that area. Some herbicides will last the entire season; most will last 9 to 12 weeks, thus requiring a second, lighter application in mid-June. Most pre-emergent herbicides also damage germinating grass seed so you should not seed your lawn immediately before or after using most pre-emergent products. Also, do not apply pre-emergents to new sod or de-thatch or aerate your lawn after using a pre-emergent product.

**POST-EMERGENTS:** Post-emergent crabicides are most effective on young crabgrass seedlings. They usually must be applied several times over a 10 day period, and they present a risk of burning the desirable turf unless sufficiently watered in. They are best used by the first week of July. The lawn should not be mowed immediately before an application of a post-emergent, and good soil moisture is a must. Also, broadleaf herbicides should not be applied within 2 weeks of the use of a post-emergent.

Johnson's carries a variety of both pre-emergent and post-emergent crabgrass controls. Call or visit one of our stores for recommendations about products that are best for you.

WASHINGTON, DC  
4200 Wisconsin Ave, NW  
at Van Ness St

[www.johnsonsfloorists.com](http://www.johnsonsfloorists.com)  
KENSINGTON, MD  
10313 Kensington Pkwy  
next to the Post Office

OLNEY, MD  
5011 Olney-Laytonsville Rd  
Rt 108 and Zion Rd

