



3 Perimeter Road, Unit 1
Manchester, NH 03103

Tel: (603) 314-5380; 1-800 733-2622
Fax: (603) 314-5386

E-mail: tcia@treecareindustry.org
Web site: www.treecareindustry.org

Contact: Robert Rouse, Staff Arborist
E-Mail: Rouse@treecareindustry.org

For immediate release

Smart Use of Fall Herbicides

Most homeowners carry on with the annual ritual known as “spring cleaning.” For arborists, landscapers and grounds managers, fall and early winter are horticulture’s cleaning time. Leaves are swept away for composting or disposal, perennials are cut back, shrubs are pruned and hedges are trimmed.

Fall is also a good time to inspect walkways, driveways and patios for those annoying trapped seeds. Despite drought and frequent sweeping, some seeds from weeds, grasses and trees will have germinated, lining joints with unsightly green. Other seeds simply lie in wait until the spring. This new growth must be stopped before the growing season arrives and those small cracks become gaping holes filled with vegetation.

Products that kill weeds (weed killers) are called herbicides. They are the most cost-effective way of eliminating unwanted growth, and will be much faster than people on hands and knees pulling or scraping along joints in paving.

Homeowners need to be careful when using herbicides! When they are used improperly, they can just as easily kill your valuable mature trees and shrubs as sprouting weeds.

Only products approved for use on non-crop areas should be considered. Users should read the product label to ensure proper application methods. Herbicides should not be applied on or near desirable trees or on areas where their roots may extend or in locations where the herbicide may be washed or move into contact with their roots.

Even properly applied chemical applications may be affected by rainfall. Some herbicides can be washed off paved surfaces or soak into the ground through the cracked joints – the very place with the greatest concentration of fine tree roots. If this happens, the next spring emerging leaves on some trees and nearby shrubs will fail to develop normally. They will be deformed, small and clustered or they will simply turn brown and fall early. What happened?

Often, chemical analysis of damaged foliage will reveal unusually high levels of herbicides or their breakdown products. Trees can and do store chemicals, so damage can be revealed and confirmed by chemical analysis months after a herbicide is applied.

What can the homeowner do?

If you are thinking about using herbicides, hire professional arborists. They will choose the correct type of herbicide for the job.

If you suspect herbicide damage, a professional arborist can help determine the best method to help the tree recover. Some professional tree care companies also offer consulting services if you suspect your tree was damaged by a herbicide application. So act now to avoid “hidden” damage during this autumn’s cleanup and make next spring a less troublesome time!

Homeowners who are looking for someone to assess their landscape and make recommendations should consult a professional arborist. Contact the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), a 65-year-old public and professional resource on trees and arboriculture. It has more than 2,300 member companies who recognize stringent safety and performance standards, and are required to carry liability insurance. An easy way to find a tree care service provider in your area is to use the “Locate Your Local TCIA Member Companies” program. You can use this service by calling 1-800-733-2622 or by doing a ZIP code search on the TCIA Web site, www.treecareindustry.org.

If you would like additional information or digital photos, please contact Garvin@treecareindustry.org