Fact sheet

Nutsedge (*Cyperus spp.*)

What is Nutsedge?

Nutsedge is an invasive weed commonly found in two varieties: Yellow and Purple. Its leaves are thicker and stiffer than most grasses and are arranged in sets of three at their base, with underground stems (rhizomes) that grow as deep as 20-35 cm below the soil surface. Buds on the tubers sprout and grow to form new plants and eventually form patches that can range up to 10 feet or more in diameter.

Nutsedge reproduces through tubers on underground stems

What is the damage caused?

Like other weeds, Nutsedge competes with agricultural plants for light, water and nutrients, often resulting in crop plant stunting and lower crop yield. Nutsedge suppresses germination and growth of nearby crop plants by releasing allelopathic chemicals, as well as harboring insect pests that spread disease.

How to manage Nutsedge?

Prevent Nutsedge infestation by removing small plants before they develop tubers and avoid excessively wet conditions. Using a tiller to destroy mature plants will spread Nutsedge infestation, because it will move the tubers around in the soil. Organic and non-organic (plastic) mulches do not work to control Nutsedge, because the sharp points at the ends of the leaves can penetrate them.

Cultural controls:

- Limit tuber production by removing plants before they have 5 to 6 leaves, forcing the tuber to grow new leaves and draining the energy reserves in the tuber.
- Cultivation: Remove plants by pulling them up by hand or hand hoeing. Be sure to dig at least 20-35 cm in order to remove tubers.
- Eliminate wet conditions that favor Nutsedge growth, such as too-frequent irrigation or poor soil drainage.

Herbicide controls:

Few herbicides are effective at eliminating Nutsedge, either because of a lack of selectivity to other plants or a lack of uptake; however, with correct application and timing herbicides may help minimize Nutsedge infestation. Don't spray any herbicide when it is windy to avoid injuring other plants with spray drift.

Ingredient	Selection Category	Water Quality and Run-Off Risk	Acute Human Toxicity	Additional comments
Halosurlfuron	Selective	Low	Unknown	Apply before the fifth-leaf stage, when the plant is drawing energy from its leaves to the newly forming tubers. After the 6th leaf has formed this chemical will only kill aboveground leaves.
Pelargonic Acid	Nonselective	Moderate/High	Low	Apply very carefully as this chemical kills any vegetation that it contacts.
Glyphosate	Nonselective	Moderate	Low	Apply when plants are young, actively growing, and haven't been recently cut to affect tubers. Requires repeat applications.

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Source: www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/.

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