

Problem: Orchard Grass



Location: Home lawns

Description:

Orchard grass often infests cool-season lawns, especially tall fescue lawns. Unfortunately, orchard grass is a lighter green and faster growing than tall fescue and so is very visible. Homeowners complain of the light green tufts of grass wherever this weed has become established. Even worse, there are no herbicides that will kill the orchard grass without also killing your turf. About the only good thing about orchard grass is that it is a bunch grass and therefore does not spread.

Recommendations: Orchard grass often comes in as a contaminant on grass seed, especially K-31 tall fescue. Buying good grass seed is the first line of defense against this weed. Orchard grass is a pasture grass and therefore is not found in the "Weed seed" portion of the seed label. Rather, orchard grass will be listed as "Other crop seed" or "Crop Seed." Therefore, try to buy grass seed that has 0.0% "Other crop seed" or "Crop Seed."

Control options are few and painful. Use glyphosate (Roundup, Killzall Weed & Grass Killer, Klearaway Systemic Weed & Grass Killer, others) to spot spray orchard grass clumps. Any lawn grasses you hit will be killed so keep the spots sprayed as small as possible. Wait until the spots have turned brown and then cut out the clumps and replace with a small piece of sod. A large infestation of orchard grass will require killing out the entire lawn and starting over.

References:

1. [Orchard Grass in Tall Fescue Lawns](#), K-State Horticulture 2023 Newsletter, No. 16, April 25, 2023

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