

Lawn Weeds

By
Scott Hininger
University of Wyoming Extension
Sheridan County
June 2, 2015

One of the more common weeds most of us recognize is the dandelion which is in the Sunflower family. This low growing perennial is easily recognized by the yellow flower followed by the white fluffy ball of seeds. The leaves are a wide lobed shaped, and the root is a long taproot up to two feet long. This plant can flower most of the growing season starting very early in the year.

The next yellow flowering weed is Black Medic which is in the pea family. This low growing plant many times is mistaken for clover with the tri-round leaves. The tiny yellow flowers turn into small pods with a single seed, which makes this an annual plant most of the time. This plant also has a long taproot. Black medic will flower most of the growing season.

There are several types of spurge with the prostrate or spotted spurge being one of the most common ones. This also is a low growing mat forming plant with a small taproot. The reddish stem has small opposite leaves, and with any plant in the spurge family if you break the stem a milky white sap will exude out. This plant is an annual unlike its cousin leafy spurge.

Common mallow is another low growing plant which is an annual. Common mallow is distinguished by the larger rounded heart shaped leaves which are cupped giving it a textured look. The flowers range in color from white to lavender.

The prostrate knotweed is also a low growing annual. However this one can grow out over two feet in length. The long joints will have lance-shaped leaves coming off of each joint.

Another easy to identify weed is the broadleaf plantain. This fibrous rooted perennial has large ovate leaves from the basal area with well-defined veins. The flower stem is 5 to 15 inches long ending with a dense elongated spike of small flowers and this flowering can go on all during the growing season.

Another prostrate growing weed is common purslane. This annual succulent looking plant has reddish colored stems with smooth shiny, succulent leaves somewhat teardrop shaped. The small yellow flower opens only in sunlight, and produces a copious amount of seed all summer long, and can stay viable for many years, making this a troublesome weed to control.

Henbit is in the mint family and also is an annual. The first leaves start at the base and are rounded and somewhat lobed, the next ones occur on long petioles and are opposite each other. The flowers show up early in the year and are pink to purple and generally quite flowering in July.

Ground Ivy can look very similar to Henbit, but it is more creeping in nature, the leaves are very similar looking however they do not clasp the stem as do Henbit leaves. This perennial has similar lavender colored flowers.

So now you may ask, so what, I can identify some weeds? Well it is good information to know whether it is an annual or a perennial. Also not all herbicides will control all of these weeds. If you have an annual that has already gone to seed, applying an herbicide will just make you feel better. Also a pre-emergence herbicide will not control perennial weeds. Because of the growing habits of these weeds mowing really does not affect them very much. By having good information, makes for better decisions, which makes for more consistent reliable results.

Trade or brand names used in this publication are used only for the purpose of educational information. The information given herein is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended, and no endorsement information of products by the University of Wyoming Extension is implied. Nor does it imply approval of products to the exclusion of others, which may also be suitable. The University of Wyoming is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.