

## Barefoot in the Grass

By: Dr. Laura A. Griffeth, Agricultural and Natural Resources County Extension Agent, Webster and Stewart Counties

Does anyone walk barefoot on their grass anymore? If you remember that long-ago tradition, you also remember the stickers that seemed to be everywhere. So the next question is how do I get rid of it?

If you have spiny seeds that are in clusters at the end of a long grassy stem, that is sand spurs, which are problems later in the summer and early fall. However, if you have low growing mats with hard to see burs, the most likely culprit is lawn burweed, also known as spurweed. And they will eat you up in the spring.



Lawn burweed is a winter weed that germinates in the winter and become a real problem as the spiny seeds mature in the spring. It is best controlled with 2 applications of atrazine in the fall and about 45 days later. These pre-emergence herbicides control burweed before it ever comes up. However if you are determined to do something now, you can spray with atrazine or a 3-way mixture of 2,4-D, dicamba, and MCPP, which are sold under several trade names. Also remember that atrazine will smoke bermudagrass unless it is dormant, so make sure you know what type of grass you have before spraying any herbicide.

On the bright side, lawn burweed begins to die as temperatures approach 90 degrees, so Mother Nature may be killing them before you can. But the burs have already formed and are still a problem, even if the plant is dead. The only recourse then is to let the plant naturally decompose.

Sand spurs are difficult to control once they begin to grow, so again the best option is to prevent them by spraying you lawn in February and about 45 days later. The most effective herbicides are oryzalin (Surflan) or pendimethalin (Halts). Once the weeds emerge, these chemicals will not stop the sand spurs.

After sand spurs begin to grow, you can try to kill them in centipede lawns with sethoxydim (Poast), but do not use sethoxydim on other turf grasses. In Bermuda, centipede, St. Augustine, or zoysiagrass lawns, you can use imazaquin (Image).

There is one more sticker weed that is becoming more prevalent and harder to kill – khakiweed. It is another low-growing weed like lawn burweed, but with larger, different shaped leaves and a huge carrot-shaped taproot. It's also a perennial,



which means it doesn't die every year, but it stays and spreads.

Metsulfuron (Manor) or the 3-way mixture of 2,4-D, Dicamba, and MCPP are the best options right now to control khakiweed. Mechanical removal of the entire plant and the entire taproot is also helpful in controlling khakiweed.



Please remember to READ and FOLLOW all label directions. The label is the law!! Even if it's printed in the smallest font size available. Most all labels can be found online at the manufacturer's website, or you can do like I sometimes do and take a picture of it with your phone and blow it up on the screen.

If you have any questions on this topic or any other agricultural topic, please call your local County Extension Office or me at the Webster County Extension office at 229.828.2325.