

The Augusta Chronicle

COLUMNS

Campbell Vaughn: Do you hate seeing bahiagrass in your lawns? Find out how to get rid of it.

Campbell Vaughn Columnist

June 13, 2025, 4:00 a.m. ET

Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

MSM Turf herbicide is effective against bahiagrass and other tough weeds but should be used cautiously around trees.

Chamberbitter is another challenging weed due to its short life cycle and prolific seed production.

Atrazine is recommended for chamberbitter control in St. Augustine and centipede lawns.

Now that we are diving into summer with long days, a decent amount of rain and some heat, our lawns are growing well. My Bermuda is getting mowed at least twice a week with the addition of some timely nitrogen.

But as the grass moves, so do the weeds. One of the weeds people love to hate also moving quickly is bahiagrass (*Paspalum notatum*).

Bahiagrass is deeply rooted, drought tolerant, poor land loving, disease and insect tolerant grass that will battle other desirable grasses. Why don't I promote this turf grass if it does all these things you might ask? That is a good question.

Bahia is commonly used as a roadside stabilizer but can be used for hay production, erosion control, and wildlife habitat, but it is more sparsely grown. That means it doesn't create the deep thick mats that people like for lawns, fairways for golf courses or fields for football.

The other big issue is that from the middle of May until late September, bahiagrass puts up an 18-inch seed head every 3-4 days after mowing. The seedhead is easily identified by its distinctive Y-shaped black seed heads.

Need a break? [Play the USA TODAY Daily Crossword Puzzle.](#)

If you want a good clean lawn, and you have bahiagrass, you have to mow every five days, which is nearly impossible when you have more than a few thousand square feet.

If bahiagrass becomes a problem in a turf area, there are some really effective herbicides available to eliminate it. Post-emergent herbicide applications should start in May, when bahiagrass is small and starting to actively grow. My favorite is MSM Turf (Metsulfuron Methyl) because it can be used on Bermuda, St. Augustine, centipede, and zoysia. MSM seems to be a little more difficult to find on the shelves of box stores, but it is available online and at local specialty stores.

A 2-ounce bottle is about \$10, but a tiny bit goes a long way. For most weeds, including bahiagrass, mix about a half ounce per acre (one-tenth teaspoon per gallon of water). So 2 ounces of product will cover 4 acres.

Campbell Vaughn: [Trips to Georgia coast, Florida include sightings of a manatee, birds of prey](#)

MSM is also good on other hard to kill weeds like Virginia buttonweed, wild garlic and ryegrass. MSM is a great, inexpensive product, but can't be used in the root zone of hardwoods like oaks and maples, so you must be careful where you spray it.

Another weed that I do battle with more and more is chamberbitter (*Phyllanthus urinaria*). When I say I hate chamberbitter, I say it with all the disdain that I can possibly muster.

Also known as gripeweed or little mimosa, this pest is a warm-season, annual, broadleaf weed that emerges from warm soils beginning in early summer. It reproduces with seeds found in the green, warty-like fruit attached to the underside

of the branch. And closes its leaves at night and opens them again in the morning. It seems to show up in full force in June and July and marches forth until frost.

From germination to seeding, chamberbitter can run an entire life cycle in as little as two weeks, so battling this pest is a nightmare.

To control chamberbitter in St. Augustine and centipede lawns, atrazine is recommended. Weed Stop for centipede and St. Augustine with Atrazine is a good one. Be careful to get the correct Weed Stop, because there are several different versions. Hi-Yield also has a concentrated atrazine product available as well.

Atrazine has both preemergence and postemergence properties which make good control on two fronts. Make two applications spaced 30 days apart.

For chamberbitter control in Bermuda and zoysia, try BioAdvanced Season Long Weed Killer for Lawns with 2,4-D, MCPP (mecoprop) and dicamba with added Isoxaben for preemergence control. You can use this BioAdvanced product at half rate on centipede and St. Augustine as well. That is nice to have when you have some mixed varieties of turf grass in your lawn.

Make sure to read the labels on these herbicides because they have a lot of good information for killing unwanted plants, but also the safest way not to harm yourself or the rest of your yard.

It is always best to get any weed before they come to seed because they can end up infesting an entire area in a big hurry.

