



Weed of The Week

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

It will not be long, soon our weed of the week will be turning lawns a beautiful golden yellow. As I type this article the sea of yellow created by what is referred to as the king of weeds or also known as Dandelion is making its home in yards pastures and even crop fields across the state. Part of the Sunflower family this weed has made it to the top of the most wanted list of homeowners and turf specialists. Dandelion is classified as a perennial herb and can be seen flowering as late in the year as December and as early as March when the weather begins to warm up. Dandelion's main form of reproduction is by seed and spread quite efficiently by the wind sending fuzzy white hair-like seed coats flying across the landscape in search of a new home. This weed can also reproduce by fragmented roots, so light tillage will aid in disbursement to other areas. Dandelion has a deep tap root allowing it to survive drought conditions in the summer. The amount of sunlight that Dandelions receive will have a direct effect on leaf shape, the lack of sunlight will allow for deep-toothed, thick, and dark green leaves compared to a plant growing in shade having slightly toothed, thin, and pale leaves. It is estimated that in the right environment, Dandelions can produce 23,000 seeds per plant. Control of Dandelion can be accomplished by Cultural controls of hand pulling (make sure to pull the whole root) good fertility and a stand of grass. Dandelions do not like competition so having a good healthy turfgrass stand can go a long way in deterring this weed. Herbicide control can be effective, 2-4-D, dicamba, and canopy/cloak applications in the fall have seen the best results.

