

Weed of The Week

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

Part of the Sunflower family this weed has made it to the top of the most wanted list of homeowners and turf specialist. Dandelions are found in lawns, waist areas, and reduced tillage crop fields. 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. Reproduction is by wind blown seeds that are covered by a fuzzy white hair like coating. 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 of 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 stand of grass. Dandelions do not like competition so have a good healthy turfgrass stand can go along ways in deterring this weed. Herbicide control can be effective, 2-4-D, dicamba, canopy/cloak applications in the fall have seen the best results.

