

Weed of The Week

Yellow Nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*)

Yellow nutsedge is commonly found throughout Ohio, where it naturally occurs in marshes and along riverbanks, and throughout cultivated fields, turf, and gardens. It is especially common in poorly draining areas. This weed is an erect, grass-like perennial. It has shiny yellow-green leaves, a distinct triangular stem, golden brown flower head, and shallow rhizomes (horizontal underground stems) that produce several nut-like tubers. Leaves are arranged in 3's and form a sheath around the stem. Small yellow nutsedge plants or young shoots are often confused with young annual grasses but can be distinguished by triangular stems that are apparent if you roll the stem between your finger and thumb or look at the stem in cross section near the base of the plant. Grass stems are flat or round. Yellow nutsedge primarily reproduces by tubers. One plant can produce several hundred to several thousand tubers during a single growing season.

Yellow nutsedge has adapted to many crops and tillage systems. Some herbicides commonly used in corn and soybeans are not very effective on yellow nutsedge and serve only to eliminate other competing weeds, thus allowing yellow nutsedge to thrive and spread. Mechanical control of yellow nutsedge includes improving drainage, crop rotation, several years of fallow, or shallow cultivation throughout the growing season (while tubers are sprouting) to prevent the formation of new tubers. For chemical control, it is important to note that this plant is a sedge, not a grass or broadleaf weed. The best time for applying an herbicide is during the active growing season in late spring or early summer. Active ingredients Halosulfuron or Sulfentrazone offer control of this sedge in turf systems. There are several pre and post emergent products available for agronomic crops such as the chloroacetamide and thiocarbamate chemical families. Be sure to follow the labels to find a product that works best for your situation.

