

Chickweed, Common

[*Stellaria media* (L.) Vill.]

DESCRIPTION

Common chickweed is a low-spreading winter annual or perennial weed with a weak, shallow root system. The prostrate stems often root at the nodes. Its spreading growth covers adjacent turf and seriously impedes turf growth. Chickweed often forms extensive, dense patches. Stems have vertical lines of hairs. Small white flowers are borne in clusters at the end of the stems. Flowers have five deeply notched petals and, though small, are quite noticeable. Common chickweed is similar in growth habit (spreading) and appearance to mouseear chickweed, but mouseear chickweed leaves are covered with soft hairs, and are dark green or gray-green, whereas common chickweed leaves are less hairy and are light green.



Characteristic	Description
Growth Season	winter annual or perennial weed
Growth Habit	prostrate, spreading; mat-forming; young plants are erect
Leaflet Number	one
Leaf Margin	smooth
Leaf Hairs	upper/lower surface
Leaf/Leaflet Shape	ovate with pointed tip, broadly elliptical, egg-shaped
Leaf Width	<1/2 - 1 inch
Leaf Venation	pinnate
Leaf Arrangement	opposite
Root Type	fibrous
Flower Color	white



common chickweed flowers



common chickweed seedhead

Note: Still not sure this is the right weed? [The Turf & Weed Identification Decision Aid](#) may help. Check the TurfFiles [glossary](#) for definitions of unfamiliar terms.

CULTURAL CONTROL

Chickweed will survive under close mowing, forming dense patches which crowd out the desirable turfgrass. This weed quickly invades thin turf areas especially where there is good soil moisture. Shade and frequent watering encourage chickweed growth.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

Certain preemergence herbicides may be used to control chickweed in areas where reseeding or overseeding of turf is not planned. These are applied in the fall prior to expected germination of chickweed, which is encouraged by cool temperatures and adequate moisture. Timely applications (early postemergence) of 3- and 4-way herbicides provide postemergence control.

Preemergence herbicides:

Herbicide	Tolerant Turfs ⁽¹⁾	Average Efficacy Rating ⁽²⁾	Range of Trial Efficacy Values, %	Number of Trials	Products ⁽³⁾
atrazine*	be, c, sa, z	E		0	AAtrex 4L
simazine	be, c, sa, z	E		0	Princep
isoxaben	ba, bc, be, bk, c, f, r, sa, z	E		0	Gallery 75
pronamide*	be	E		0	Kerb
pendimethalin	ba, be, bk, c, f, r, sa, z	G-E		0	Pendulum, PRE-M, Scott's Turf Builder With Halts
prodiamine	bc, be, bk, c, f, r, sa, z	G		0	Barricade, Lesco Stonewall, Quali-Pro Prodiamine, RegalKade
dithiopyr	ba, bc, be, bk, c, f, r, sa, z	G		0	Dimension, Quali-Pro Dithiopyr**, Vigoro Crabgrass Preventer, Vigoro Dimension
oryzalin	ba, be, c, f, sa, z	G		0	Quali-Pro Oryzalin, Surflan A.S.
metolachlor	ba, be, c, sa, z	F		0	Pennant Magnum

Postemergence herbicides:

Herbicide	Tolerant Turfs ⁽¹⁾	Average Efficacy Rating ⁽²⁾	Range of Trial Efficacy Values, %	Number of Trials	Products ⁽³⁾
2,4-D & dicamba & mecoprop	bk, f, r, z	E	100	4	MEC Amine-D*, Trimec Bentgrass, Trimec Classic, Trimec Southern, Triplet
2,4-D & dicamba & fluroxypyr	ba, bc, be, bk, f, r, sa, z	E	100	3	Escalade
metsulfuron	be, sa, z	E	100	3	Escort**, Manor

Postemergence herbicides:

Herbicide	Tolerant Turfs ⁽¹⁾	Average Efficacy Rating ⁽²⁾	Range of Trial Efficacy Values, %	Number of Trials	Products ⁽³⁾
2,4-D & carfentrazone & dicamba & mecoprop	ba, bc, be, bk, f, r, z	E	97 - 100	2	Speed Zone, Speed Zone Southern
dicamba & MCPA & mecoprop*	bc, be, bk, f, r, z	E	100	2	TRI-POWER
2,4-D & dicamba & fluroxypyr & mecoprop	bk, f, r, z	E	100	1	Spotlight & Trimec Southern
2,4-D & dicamba & mecoprop & sulfentrazone	bc, bk, f, r, z	E	100	1	Dismiss & Trimec Classic, Surge*
fluroxypyr & metsulfuron	sa, z	E	100	1	Manor & Spotlight
rimsulfuron**	be	E	100	1	TranXit GTA
trifloxysulfuron-sodium	be, z	E	100	1	Monument
2,4-D & triclopyr*	bk, f, r	E		0	Chaser
dicamba	ba, be, bk, f, r, z	E		0	Banvel, Clarity, Vanquish
imazaquin	be, c, sa, z	E		0	Image
bentazon	ba, bc, be, bk, c, f, sa, z	G		0	Basagran T/O
metribuzin	be	G		0	Sencor 75 Turf
pronamide*	be	G		0	Kerb
fluroxypyr	ba, bk, c, f, r, sa, z	F	70 - 84	2	Spotlight
glyphosate		F	53 - 100	2	Glyphosate Original, Roundup, Touchdown Pro**

* For use only by or under the supervision of a certified applicator, or by commercial nursery, turf, and landscape personnel.

** Not for application to residential lawns.

Footnotes:

(1) Turfgrass Codes:

- ba bahiagrass
- bc bentgrass, creeping
- be bermudagrass
- bk bluegrass, Kentucky
- c centipedegrass
- f fescue, tall
- r ryegrass, perennial
- sa St. Augustinegrass
- z zoysiagrass

blank No turfgrass in the database is completely tolerant. Check label to see if chemical can be used at a reduced rate or during the dormant season on your turfgrass.

(2) Efficacy Ratings:

- E excellent control (90 to 100%)

G good control (80 to 90%)
F fair control (70 to 80%)

Efficacy ratings are based on herbicide trials performed by weed scientists at North Carolina State University between 1997 and 2007. The number of trials included in the efficacy ratings is displayed in the next-to-last column. The higher this number, the more confidence can be placed in the efficacy values. Trials may have involved sequential applications of one or more chemical. Details of individual trials (herbicide rates, dates of application, environmental conditions at time of application, etc) can be viewed on the TurfFiles web site, through the [Turf Weed Management Decision Aid](#).

Efficacy ratings for chemicals lacking trial data are from "[Pest Management Strategic Plan for Turfgrass in the Southern United States](#)," a summary of a workshop for turf experts from multiple universities held in Griffin, GA in October, 2004. The workshop was sponsored by the Southern Region Integrated Pest Management Center.

- (3) Recommendations of specific chemicals are based upon information on the manufacturer's label and performance in a limited number of trials. Because environmental conditions and methods of application may vary widely, performance of the chemical will not always conform to the safety and pest control standards indicated by experimental data. The order in which brand names are given is not an indication of a recommendation or criticism.

Recommendations for the use of agricultural chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services does not imply endorsement by North Carolina State University or discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Other brand names may be labeled for use on turfgrasses. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact your county's Cooperative Extension agent.

Links contained in this document:

Glossary: <http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/Glossary.aspx>

Pest Management Strategic Plan: <http://www.ipmcenters.org/pmsp/pdf/SouthernTurfgrass.pdf>

Turf & Weed Identification Decision Aid: <http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/turfid/>

Turf Weed Management Decision Aid: <http://www.turffiles.ncsu.edu/turfweedmgmt/>

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