

Creeping Charlie Identification and Control



Creeping Charlie in bloom

Creeping Charlie, alias Ground Ivy, is a broadleaf lawn weed that very often becomes invasive on home lawns and gardens. This invasive weed was introduced for use as a ground cover in home gardens and has escaped that intended use. It is a vigorous, low growing perennial weed that has round, opposite leaves with scalloped edges. The small purple-blue flowers appear in early to mid May. This member of the mint family prefers shady and persistently moist environments, but will grow in areas that are sunny and/or dry.

Creeping Charlie is hard to control. It cannot be pulled out without leaving parts of it behind that will regenerate. It is also resistant to the common lawn herbicide 2-4-D. Most liquid formulations of broadleaf herbicides suited for lawns contain three herbicides: 2-4 D, mCPP, and Dicamba. The third ingredient, Dicamba, will kill creeping Charlie and other hard-to-kill lawn weeds, but only if used at the correct time and frequency. Ortho, Bayer and Gordon's are some brands to look for when trying to find an herbicide to apply for this purpose. Another ingredient that will kill Creeping Charlie is Triclopyr, found in brush killer herbicides.

Broadleaf weeds like Creeping Charlie are easiest to control when actively growing because they will quickly absorb the herbicide. With Creeping Charlie, timing is most important. The best times to treat this plant with herbicides are when the weed is in full flower (early May) and in fall after the first frost. Several herbicides treatments will be necessary. Space these treatments about 10 days apart.

Follow weed killer labels directions carefully. Mixing herbicides at a higher concentration than directed is unlawful and may do damage to your lawn grasses.



Creeping Charlie foliage: notice the scalloped edges

Created by: David Bayer

Seasonal Horticulture Assistant
UW-Extension, Outagamie County
3365 W Brewster St., Appleton, WI 54914
Telephone:(920) 832-5119
Website: <http://outagamie.uwex.edu>
Publications: <http://learningstore.uwex.edu>