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**A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY
WARREN FROELICH
NDSU EXTENSION SERVICE
WILLIAMS COUNTY**

Fall Weed Control in Lawns

For most homeowners weed control in lawns is normally done in the spring as the dandelions begin to appear. Although spring application of herbicides probably catches us in a better mood, fall applications are really quite effective, especially if a systemic product is used. I say this with a bit of hesitation because the most common herbicide used (2,4-D) is not translocated throughout the plants vascular system, including roots.

The herbicide, 2,4-D, is simply a contact product which kills only the above ground foliage. It is very effective on sprouting annual broadleaf plants. However, I have found a spring application plus another during the fall to be very effective on hard-to-kill weeds such as dandelions.

Some of the lawns weed control products promoted as being very effective against dandelions contain dicamba along with 2,4-D. Dicamba does make for more effective weed control but there is a downside. It is highly water soluble and can move with gravity into the tree root zone. Keep in mind dicamba is for broadleaf plants and our deciduous trees are also broadleaf plants.

So, if you applied a herbicide to the dandelions this spring, dig out that hand sprayer and give them another treatment this fall. Next spring you can expect to find your lawn free of nearly all broadleaf weeds. This will give you more time to apply some fertilizer which promotes a denser growth of grass and in turn will make the lawn more competitive against invading weeds.

Selecting Portable Generators

Following last spring's April 30th storm I promised myself an early Christmas present, a portable electric generator. Since then I have been casually looking at generators on display in various stores. Of course, I am looking for the best buy but until recently I had little idea what to look for. In my search for information I found a publication of the Mississippi State University Extension Service. It is a simple two-page fact sheet which provides a checklist along with concise information about size, fuel type, noise and electrical considerations such as voltage, current, starting current frequency and power. It also hi-lites many safety issues.

Selecting the right size will be my biggest challenge as it is obvious the larger output generators cost more. Because the water pump and heater motor operate on 240 volts, my purchase will need to have that feature along with the ability to provide power to some of the systems which operate on 120 volts. A generator which is too small can cause severe operating problems causing the generator to malfunction or not perform the task. On the other hand, using a generator that is too large results in higher initial cost, higher operating cost and added weight.

I do have a few copies of the Mississippi publication and will make them available at no cost. Just call 701-577-4595. I intend to have enough power to keep the temperature in the house at tolerable levels and provide water to the cows. Hopefully that is enough to keep away future snowstorms and power outages.