



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/preventing-weeds-in-lawn>

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Turf Talk: Be proactive in crowding out weeds

How you manage your lawn makes a difference in keeping it healthy

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – If the growing season sometimes seems like an ongoing battle to keep weeds out of your home lawn, Kansas State University horticultural expert Cynthia Domenghini has good news.

There's a better way.

Instead of constantly applying chemical treatments, Domenghini suggests taking a proactive approach to prevent weeds from growing in the first place. Some of the common reasons why weeds invade lawns include:

- **Improper mowing.** Mowing too low and too infrequently thins the turf, allowing weeds to get started.
- **Improper watering.** Frequent watering encourages weed seed germination, disease, thatch and shallow-rooted turf that is less competitive with weeds for soil moisture and nutrients.
- **Improper fertilizing.** Fertilizing too much or too little or at the wrong time may benefit weeds more than grass.
- **Compacted soil.** Soil compaction is a hidden stress on the turfgrass root system. The grass is unable to compete effectively with weeds.
- **Excessive wear.** Turf areas used for recreation and sports are subject to wear and compaction.
- **Wrong kind of grass.** The wrong variety for the location will gradually decline and be invaded by weeds.
- **Environmental stress.** Weeds often take over a lawn after it has been weakened and thinned from weather-related stress.

- **Thatch.** Excessive thatch causes shallow-rooted grass and contributes to insect and disease problems.

Domenghini said guidance on growing a healthy lawn that will crowd out existing weeds is available online in a K-State Research and Extension publication titled, [Weed Control in Home Lawns](#).

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a [weekly Horticulture Newsletter](#) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens.

Interested persons can subscribe to the newsletter, as well as send their garden and yard-related questions to hortsupport@ksu.edu, or contact your [local K-State Research and Extension office](#).

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Sidebar: Question of the Week

Am I too late to plant potatoes this year?

In Kansas the ideal planting time for potatoes ranges from the beginning to late March and even into April. If you have seed potatoes to plant, go ahead and get them in the ground within the next two weeks for the best harvest.

Be sure you are using loose soil with good drainage. Provide consistent water and keep up with weeding. Side-dress the rows with nitrogen or an all-purpose fertilizer, per label recommendations.

-- Cynthia Domenghini, K-State horticulture expert, Cdom@ksu.edu

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Weed Control in Home Lawns, https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/weed-control-in-home-lawns_MF2385.pdf

K-State Horticulture Newsletter, <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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