

During our trip to Davis Purdue Ag Center this week, we noticed a number of fields with heavy infestations of flowering dandelions in the central part of the state, just north of Indianapolis (Figure 1). In addition, our conversations with farmers and agronomists in Indiana would indicate that this is a relatively widespread problem throughout a good portion of the eastern half of Indiana.



Figure 1. Dandelion in corn stubble.

The purpose of this article is to summarize some of treatments one can use if they have dandelions that need treatment before planting. In general, dandelions are typically tougher to control in the spring than they are in the fall. In addition, they are tougher to control in the early part of the spring (March) than they are in the latter part of the spring (late April – Early May). The reason is that herbicide activity is typically less when daytime air temperatures do not regularly get above 50 degrees F. The reason for this is if the plant is not actively

growing (or is dormant), it will not translocate herbicide to active meristematic sinks. The result is that the herbicide is metabolized or inactivated in the plant and can not do it's work at the target site. A second reason is that by mid-April, dandelions have flowered at least once and many physiological processes in the plants change after the onset of reproductive growth.

In OSU and Purdue trials, the best control for late spring treatments is usually obtained with a combination of 2,4-D (1 lb ai/A) and glyphosate (0.75 lb ae/A). Keep in mind that use of this rate of 2,4-D usually will require 30 day preplant interval before planting soybean and a 7 to 14 day preplant interval before planting corn. However, there are a number of 2,4-D products available and the preplant interval varies by product.

If you feel you cannot wait the required interval before planting, then one can use at least 0.75 lb ae/A of glyphosate and plant anytime after application. In Purdue trials conducted in 2003, we evaluated glyphosate applied at 0.75 lb ae/A and 1.125 lb ae/A and found that control ranged from 60 to 70% at 19 days after treatment, and 93 to 97% control at 37 days after treatment. Both treatments then received another postemergence treatment of 0.75 lb ae/A of glyphosate. On July 12, dandelion control with 0.75 followed by 0.75 lb ae/A was 77%, while control with 1.125 ae/A followed by 0.75 lb ae/A was 91%. It appeared that utilization of a higher rate of glyphosate in the initial treatment was beneficial in weakening the plant so it could be controlled better by the followup application. So keep in mind that it is unlikely that complete control will be obtained by a single application in the spring, but utilization of a followup application of glyphosate in RR soybeans and Distinct or 2,4-D in corn will help provide additional control or suppression of dandelions.

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Information listed here is based on research and outreach/extension programming at Purdue University and elsewhere. The use of trade names is for clarity to readers of this site, does not imply endorsement of a particular brand nor does exclusion imply non-approval. Always consult the herbicide label for the most current and update precautions and restrictions. Copies, reproductions, or transcriptions of this document or its information must bear the statement 'Produced and prepared by Purdue University Extension Weed Science' unless approval is given by the author.