

Nutsedge Control Shown In Soil Fumigation Study

Soil fumigation has been an accepted practice for about 20 years among nurserymen who desire healthy ornamental and strawberry plants that are free of soil-borne disease and insects.

Now horticultural research workers associated with the University of Maryland at College Park have shown that soil fumigation each fall at sufficient rates and proper soil temperatures also can control yellow nutsedge—a pesky perennial weed—in the following growing season.

Research findings to support this conclusion were formally presented in a technical paper by Dr. C. Edward Beste, Extension horticultural weed specialist for

the University of Maryland. Dr. Beste spoke at a morning session during the 13th annual meeting of the Weed Science Society of America.

His published report represents the finale of a three-year study begun by the late C. Dwain Altman, also an Extension horticultural weed specialist, at the University of Maryland's vegetable research farm west of Salisbury. Altman's project was promoted by observations from fumigation studies involving soil-borne diseases, conducted by Dr. James C. Kantzes, Extension plant pathologist at the Eastern Shore location.

The Beste-Altman study in-

cluded three commercial fumigants, bearing the trade names Vorlex, Telone C and DD-PIC. It showed that commercially acceptable yellow nutsedge control was obtained with Vorlex at 30 gallons per acre, and with Telone C or DD-PIC at 40 gallons per acre applied in the fall.

Effectiveness of nutsedge control with all three fumigants was reduced measurably as soil temperatures at the six-inch depth fell from 50 degrees F. to 40 degrees F. at the time of fumigation.

Effectiveness of Vorlex in controlling nutsedge, for instance, dropped off from 80 percent to only 20 percent with a 10-degree drop in soil temperature at the six-inch depth.

The other two commercial fumigants each showed an effectiveness drop from 80 percent to 60 percent for nutsedge control under identical temperature conditions in the Maryland study.

Since cultural practices for the light soils on Maryland's lower Eastern Shore, along with normal seasonal workloads, dictate that soil fumigation be done in the fall, Dr. Beste concluded that the fumigants should be applied in October. This timing would normally allow at least two weeks with soil temperatures of 50 degrees F. or more at the six-inch depth.

Fertilizing Forage Crops Reduces Weed Problems

Increasing the competition of forage species through adequate fertilization is frequently overlooked as a means of weed control, reports E. J. Peters, USDA agronomist at the University of Missouri. He spoke at the Weed Science Society of America meetings in Atlanta.

Weeds come into pastures because the existing vegetation is thin and low in vigor so that weeds come into the bare areas between forage plants. On many pastures weeds can be killed with herbicides but new weeds will

come up unless the sod is thick enough to prevent the new weeds from growing.

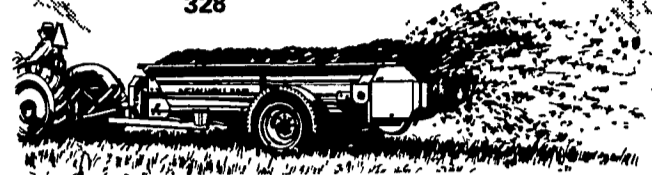
"In our research we applied fertilizers and showed that we could increase the density of forage grasses and legumes to the degree that annual weed infestations could be reduced," Peters said.

Fertilization had little effect on the density of perennial weeds that were already established when the fertilization program began. Herbicides used with fertilizers were most effective in controlling weeds.

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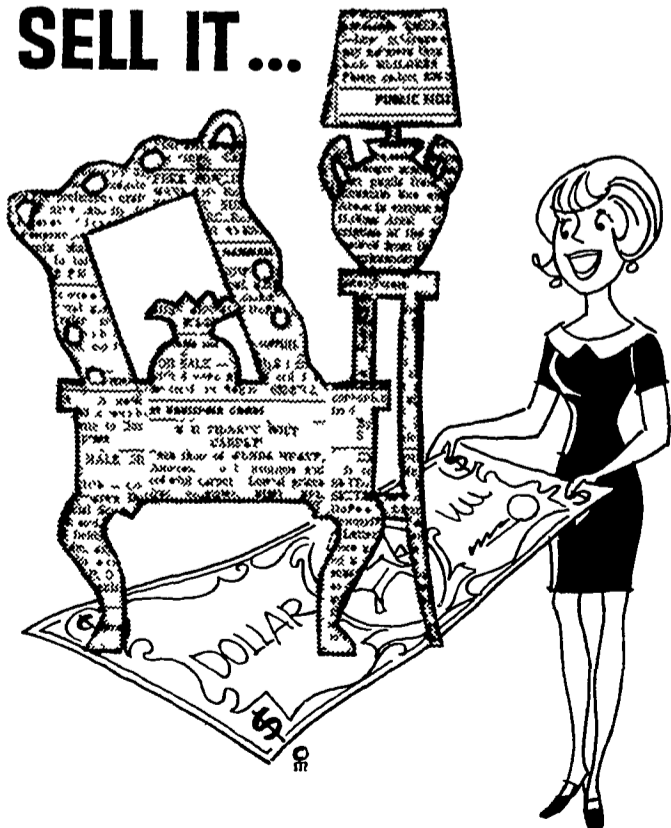
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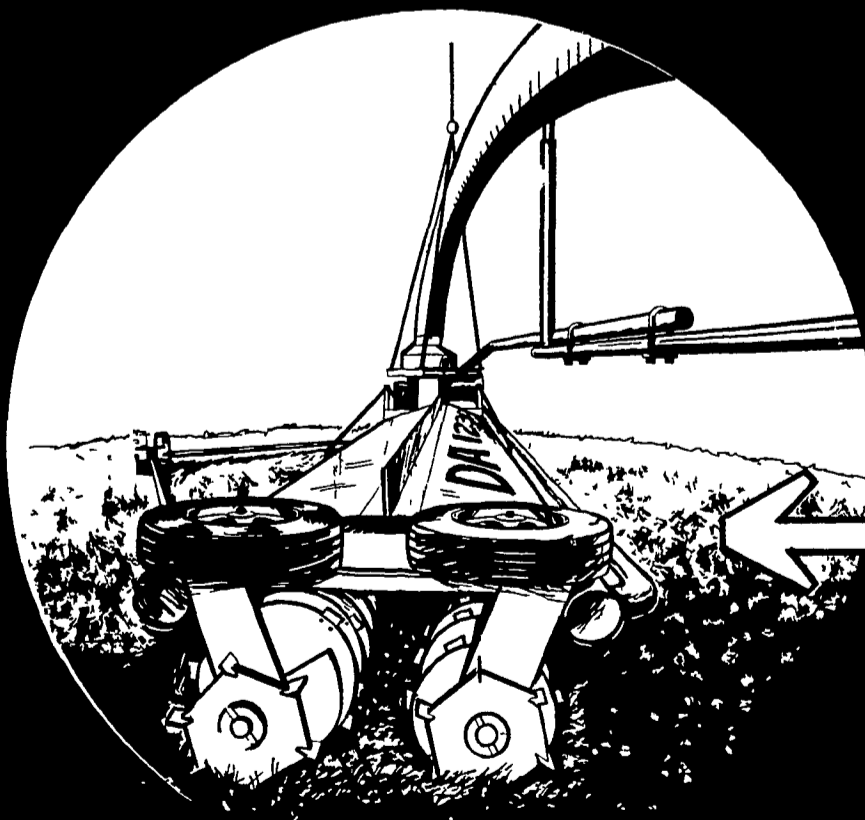
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