

Controlling Buttercup in Pastures and Hay Fields

Anthony Carver, Extension Agent

865-828-3411

bcarver4@utk.edu



No, it's not the state flower...its buttercup. This sea of yellow shows up every spring. The good news is that buttercup is easy to control with a timely spray application.

Identification:

There are 2 types of buttercup: common (hairy) and bulbous. The common (hairy) buttercup has regular root hairs underground. The harder to control bulbous buttercup has an onion type of bulb root system as shown in the picture. At this time, Grainger does not have the bulbous buttercup in the county. If anyone happens to find the bulbous type, please contact the Extension Office.



Bulbous Buttercup

Control Chart:

Type of Buttercup	Chemical Control & Rates	Timing
Common (Hairy)	2,4-D Ester at 2 quarts/Acre	Mid Feb to Mid-March or Mid Nov to Mid Dec
Bulbous Buttercup	GrazonNext HL at 1.6 pints/A Or Duracor at 12 oz/Acre	Mid Feb to Mid-March or Mid Nov to Mid Dec

* Always add surfactant at 1 quart/100 gallon of water

Temperatures/Timing are Important:

Weeds can only be controlled when they are actively growing. Weeds turn on at a specific temperature, it is at 55 degrees when they become active. It also takes time for the weeds to start the growing process. Therefore, timing is crucial when planning to spray. **There must be 3 days straight of 55-degree high temperatures during the mid Feb to mid-March or the mid Nov to mid Dec timeframe. Then on the third day you spray.**

Fall Preferred:

Historically, the vast majority of applications for control of buttercups have been in the spring. However, University of Tennessee research and producer experience has continued to show that fall is a better time to spray for them. The reasons why are:

1. Buttercups emerge in the fall. They are small and actively growing then. (easier to kill)
2. Most important keys to getting good results is to spray buttercups before they bloom. This is automatic with fall applications.
3. In late-winter to spring it is very wet and windy, making it difficult to spray before they bloom.
4. Many producers may have more available time in the fall, compared to the spring. Time consuming late-winter to early-spring activities such as calving, spreading fertilizer and getting ground ready for row crop planting often make it difficult to get pastures and hay fields sprayed on a timely basis.
5. Fewer vegetable crops, gardens and active greenhouses are present in the fall; this means the risk of off-target damage to sensitive plants is lower.