***Billy Skaggs***

## Controlling Wild Garlic and Wild Onions

Recently, a homeowner called me in a panic and proceeded to describe a serious weed problem she and her husband were fighting in their fescue lawn. "We have a blue-zillion wild onions in our yard," she said, "and we haven't found anything that will kill them." After allowing her to vent for a minute, I told her what she was probably dealing with was a combination of wild garlic and wild onions. The two are very similar in growth habit and appearance, and most importantly, are controlled the same way.

Wild garlic is a cool-season perennial weed with slender, hollow cylindrical leaves. The plant derives its energy and resilience from underground white bulbs, which bear offset bulblets. It's the bulb and additional bulblets that make wild garlic so difficult to control. Wild garlic occurs in lawns, fields, pastures and athletic fields and produces a distinctive garlic odor when crushed or mowed. Wild onion is often found on the same sites as wild garlic. You can distinguish the two by looking at the roots. Wild onion does not produce offset bulblets.

I've heard of many lawn and garden enthusiasts spending hours and hours trying to pull the bulblets up. In the case of wild garlic, you are almost certain to leave a piece of the bulb or bulblet in the ground which will likely produce another plant. The difficulty in controlling wild garlic comes from the fact that it reproduces from the bulbs and by seed. Also, the fact that wild garlic and wild onion bulbs can live in the soil for years doesn't help either. For this reason, it requires a long-term commitment to win the battle with wild garlic and wild onions.

As for control, the best product available is Image, which contains the active ingredient, imazaquin. Image is labeled for use only in established bermuda, centipede, St. Augustine and zoysia. All other turfgrasses, including tall fescue, can be severely injured by Image. Image does an excellent job on wild garlic, annual sedges, yellow nutsedge and purple nutsedge. When using Image (imazaquin), remember do **NOT** apply when the grass is emerging from winter dormancy and, do **NOT** apply to newly planted or sprigged turfgrasses. The label says "established" turf for a reason.the battle is one you can win with patience and diligence.

If you have a fescue lawn, you should stay away from Image, and instead use a 2, 4-D product, such as Weed-B-Gon. Weed-B-Gon is available in many formulations, and can even be purchased in a ready-to-use version. So, the next time you're faced with a yard full of wild garlic and wild onions, don't panic. You have several options for control, and the battle is one you can win with patience and diligence.

---From ***Muscogee Green Industry News***  Volume 1 Issue 4---