

**Friday's Feature**

By

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**Dollarweed doldrums**

I wish I had a dollar for every dollarweed I've pulled. It is one of the most pervasive and frustrating weeds for gardeners.

Dollarweed, also known as pennywort, is classified as a broadleaf weed. The leaves look similar to a lily pad and can grow up to the size of a silver dollar, hence the plant's name. It grows low to the ground, with one round, waxy leaf per petiole. The petiole (stem) is found in the center of the leaf, like a miniature umbrella.



Dollarweed is an indicator weed for high moisture areas and weakened turfgrass. It prefers damp areas and is worse during years of above average rainfall. However, once established it will grow in drier sites.

The first line of defense in controlling dollarweed is to take control of your irrigation system. Dollarweed thrives in lawns that are watered too much. You will find it difficult or impossible to control dollarweed in areas that stay wet or where irrigation occurs frequently. Established lawns should be watered on an "as-needed" basis. University of Florida research demonstrated a 24% reduction in dollarweed numbers simply by reducing the frequency of irrigation.

Thick healthy turfgrass is also important in the prevention of creeping type weeds like dollarweed. Heavy dollarweed infestations are often the result of poor cultural practices such as mowing too low or failure to manage diseases in a timely manner. Good cultural practices like proper mowing and maintaining good soil

fertility are important in reducing the predominance of weeds.

**Control in Turf:** Isoxaben (Gallery®) is recommended for preemergence control of dollarweed. Preemergence herbicides must be applied at the correct time in spring before the weed seed germinates. However, since dollarweed is a perennial weed with creeping underground stems, additional control measures will usually be needed.

Postemergence products are applied to the growing weed. Products containing atrazine (Image® for St. Augustinegrass and Centipedegrass or Ortho® Weed B Gon® Spot Weed Killer for St. Augustine Lawns) or the three-way mixes that include 2,4-D and dicamba (Spectracide® Weed Stop® 2x Weed Killer for Lawns or Bayer Advanced™ Southern Weed Killer for Lawns) will provide fair control as will imazaquin (Image® Nutsedge Killer).

However, tolerances of various turfgrass species differ tremendously to herbicides so it is critical that labels are read carefully for uses, rates, timing of application, etc. and strictly adhered to. Remember also that some herbicides cannot be used when we are experiencing temperatures above 85 degrees F.

**Control in Ornamentals:** Cultural practices and mulches are most likely your best defense since few effective herbicides are available for ornamental beds. Coarse textured mulches like pine straw or pine mulch 2-4" deep will help smother and limit invasion. Hoeing and hand pulling will also help reduce population density but regrowth will occur unless underground stems are removed.

Image® Nutsedge Killer (imazaquin) lists dollarweed control with repeat applications and can be used around some ornamentals. Read the label carefully for specific use applications. Isoxaben (Gallery®) can also be applied to many ornamentals. Glyphosate (RoundUp®) can be applied directly to dollarweed foliage, but extreme care is necessary to avoid any contact with ornamentals or severe injury can occur.

Another control option is to hand-pull it. Just be sure to get the white rhizomes as well as the plant itself.

Theresa Friday is the Environmental Horticulture Extension Agent for Santa Rosa County. The use of trade names, if used in this article, is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product name(s) and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others.

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