Q. Finally my crabgrass is dying, but what can I do to prevent it from taking over my lawn again next year?

A. There are several varieties of crabgrass that grow here. One is commonly referred to as “blanket” crabgrass because it feels like you are walking on a mat when it is thriving. It is just one of many grassy weeds that grow in lawns in addition to broadleaf weeds and sedges.

Your crabgrass is dying because it is a summer annual and depends on the warm weather to grow. The problem is that when it was thriving, it produced many seed heads. These seeds are lying on or near the soil surface waiting to germinate when the soil warms to 50-55 degrees. A pre-emergent weed product can be applied to prevent this germination. Between February 1 and 15 is the generally preferred application period for this products. Remember to do all soil disturbances before applying this product or the preventative barrier will be compromised.

Do read all the instructions on the pre-emergent label. Products will have a residual effect for 6-12 weeks, but they are not as effective towards the end of the cycle; therefore, an additional application may be needed 6-9 weeks after that initial application for season-long control. This product will have little or no effect on actively growing weeds. For those weeds, a post-emergent herbicide will be needed.

Growing a healthy lawn is your first defense against weeds. This entails proper fertilization, watering, mowing and pest control. A dense turf prevents weed seeds from receiving the needed light to germinate.

Special Events:
Chickens 101 Workshop, Palmer Farms, 8336 Webber Road, 8:30 a.m.-noon, January 8 ($15.00 registration fee)
Plant a tree on Florida Arbor Day, January 21, so you too can reap the benefits of trees. The City of North Port will be celebrating Arbor Day at Lamarque Elementary School.

PLANTING GUIDE
Vegetables & herbs: Beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, chives, collards, coriander, dill, eggplant, endive, fennel, garlic, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, onion, parsley, peas, pepper, potatoes, radish, rosemary, sage, tomatoes, turnips, and watermelon
Annuals: Alyssum, ageratum, Calendula, dusty miller, geranium, Lobelia, nasturtium, pansy, ornamental cabbage and kale, petunia, phlox, snapdragon, Statice and Verbena
Perennials: Agapanthus, Amaryllis, blue sage calla lily, Clivia, Crinum lily, daylily, Dianella, Dianthus, geranium, society garlic, spider lily, Tithonia, Viola, and walking iris
Fruits in Season: Avocado, banana, carambola, citrus (calamondin, grapefruit, key lime, lemon, lime, orange, and tangerine), hog plum, Indian jujube, kumquat, and papaya
Blooming plants: Bougainvillea, bromeliad, bush daisy, Chinese hat plant, crown of thorns, desert rose, firebush, Kalanchoe, Lantana, lion’s ear, loquat, mango, orchid tree, rose, Tabebuia, Thunbergia, and Turk’s cap
Upcoming educational classes:
Register online [http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu](http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu) or call 861-9900.

- **Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Nine Landscape Principles**, North Port Library, 6:30 p.m. January 4; Gulf Gate Library, 1:30 p.m. January 7; Longwood Park, 5:30 p.m. January 10
- **Organic Vegetable Gardening-Water Management & Frost Protection**, Warm Mineral Springs Spa, North Port, 8:30 a.m. January 11
- **Butterfly Gardening**, St. Wilfred Episcopal Church, 4:00 p.m. January 11
- **Rain Barrel Workshops**, Phillippi Farmhouse Market, noon January 12; Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. January 15
- **Florida’s Buggy Critters-The Good, Bad & Harmless**, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. January 12
- **Sarasota County Local Foodsheds**, Twin Lakes Park, 4:00 p.m. January 12
- **Organic Vegetable Gardening-Frost Protection**, Laurel Community Garden, 10:30 a.m. January 15
- **Container Gardening**, Phillippi Farmhouse Market, noon January 19
- **Rodent & Mole Management**, Shamrock Park, 2:00 p.m. January 20
- **Florida Snakes**, Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. January 26; Gulf Gate Library, 1:30 p.m. February 4
- **Is this Spider Dangerous?** Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. January 26
- **Organic Vegetable Gardening-Pest Management**, Warm Mineral Springs Spa, North Port, 8:30 a.m. February 1
- **Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: Creating Your Florida Yard**, North Port Library, 6:30 p.m. February 1
- **Attracting Beneficial Insects to your Garden**, Phillippi Farmhouse Market, noon February 2
- **Introduction to Insects**, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. February 2
- **Creating Wildlife Habitat in & around Stormwater Ponds**, Shamrock Park, 2:00 p.m. February 3
- **Organic Vegetable Gardening**, Orange Blossom Community Garden, 18th & Orange, 1:00 p.m. February 5

For information
The Master Gardener Help Desk now has an email address: mghelpdesk@scgov.net to answer questions. It is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-Noon and 1:00-4:00 p.m. You can call (941-861-9807) or visit our office at Twin Lakes Park on Clark Road east of I-75 with landscape questions. We also have weekly satellite help desks at the four south county libraries, Gulf Gate Library and Phillippi Farmhouse Market.

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Blanket crabgrass *Digitaria serotina*