

WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING: NUTSEdge



Is It Grass?

Possibly one of the worst turf weeds to infest your lawn, Nutsedge spreads quickly and is extremely hard to eradicate. Nutsedge is the common name for *Cyperus esculentus* (yellow) and *Cyperus rotundus* (purple), a weed type that germinates well in warm moist soils and spreads through tubers (referred to as "nuts" or "nutlets") under the soil. The tubers, or nuts, are grown on underground stems known as rhizomes that can grow as deep as 12 to 16 inches under the surface of the soil bed. Buds sprout on the tubers and grow new plants, this process eventually leads to a patch of Nutsedge.



Nutsedge looks similar to grass, but the blades are thicker and stiffer than most grasses. They grow straighter and in sets of 3 stems at the base (as opposed to 2 in grasses).

An infestation of Nutsedge is problematic because it grows twice as fast as turf grass requiring more frequent mowing and it is lighter green resulting in non-uniform turf appearance.



Tubers, like this one, grow underground and form new plants

Fighting Nutsedge

Nutsedge is nearly impossible to get rid of, but it can be controlled. If you are lucky and catch the Nutsedge early you can limit the production of tubers, which will suppress it from spreading. To limit tuber production continually remove the shoots and as much of the plant as possible by hand every 2 weeks. This will cause the plant to put all of its energy into growing new shoots instead of new tubers. Mature tubers can re-grow their shoots up to 12 times, so you will need to be consistent.

Since Nutsedge looks similar to grass it is difficult to recognize early. If it has already taken over a small portion of your lawn you may want to consider chemical treatment. The best herbicide to treat Nutsedge is called Sedge Hammer, which is very expensive and can only be applied by a Certified Spray Technician (AZ SPCC Certified). The chemical should be applied during the growing season every 3 weeks; it will take as many as 3 or more applications to fully control the Nutsedge. To find a company with Certified Spray Technicians visit <http://www.sb.state.az.us/CompanyDirectory.php>.

