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## Spring is for weed control

April showers bring May flowers. Some of those “flowers” include dandelions. Homeowners will spring into action with a dizzying array of herbicides – weed killers. Herbicides are meant to kill plants, insecticides kill insects, and fungicides prevent fungi from growing. Using the wrong insecticide or fungicide may result in poor results. Use the wrong herbicide and you could permanently damage your landscape. With any pesticide it is imperative that you read and understand the label. Tease the glued cover loose and read the entire thing with a magnifying glass – cover to cover.

### Spring weed control

Now, both pre-emergent herbicides which prevent crabgrass, and also a post-emergent herbicide to control existing broadleaf weeds are needed. A pre-emergent intends to stop weeds from growing before they emerge, by preventing the weed plant from germinating or “clipping” the weed’s roots. Pre-emergent herbicides are often formulated with the fertilizer. The bag will say something like fertilizer with crabgrass killer or crabgrass preventer. Post-emergent means that it controls weeds after they have started growing. The post-emergent herbicide may say something like Weed-B-Gon, Lawn Weed Killer, Weed Out, and Selective Weed Killer. These materials control weeds by contacting the weed foliage and roots being absorbed into the plant.

Everybody has heard of Roundup, but sometimes it is not called Roundup. The active ingredient is Glyphosate. Many companies manufacture Glyphosate under the names including Killzall, Season Long, Roundup and others. Glyphosate kills plants that are contacted or sprayed, often used in driveway cracks and spot spraying weeds in beds. Don’t use it in the lawn as it kills grass too!! Not well known, is that Glyphosate can also be taken up through exposed (surfaced) tree and shrub roots and trunk bark. Rarely are larger plants killed, but the foliage may become distorted for the season.

### Caution – pay close attention!

There are herbicides that can get you into real trouble applied incorrectly. They may say brush killer, stump killer, and vegetation killer. These are good materials, but not when used in the lawn, over tree roots, or even close to a tree. These herbicides are meant to kill unwanted plants including trees and shrubs. These herbicides are highly active in the plant and can move through root systems traveling from tree to tree. These are also active in the soil and can move many feet from where you applied them.

**Complicated?** You bet. Read and understand the label and apply the materials exactly as the literature reads. More product does not imply better results. Or, call a lawn care company and leave the task to a professional.