

A MOST TROUBLESOME WEED: GROUND IVY **(*Glechoma hederacea*)**

Ground ivy, sometimes called creeping Charlie or gill-over-the-ground, is perhaps the lawn weed we receive the most questions about. Ground ivy is a creeping perennial weed which roots at the nodes. The leaves are opposite, round in shape, with scalloped edges and a rough upper surface. The flowers are bluish-purple and borne in small clusters in the leaf axils. Ground ivy is a member of the mint family and has a common feature of the mints: the stem is square in cross section. It does well in both poorly and well-drained soils, in both sun and shade. It is an aggressive weed which forms unsightly, dense patches, and out competes most lawn grasses. It can quickly take over large areas. The stems grow on top of the grass and root at the nodes where they come in contact with the soil. If ground ivy is pulled out of the lawn by hand, it often reappears, since it will grow from any stems accidentally not removed, and it is virtually impossible to remove it all. Ground ivy will often also grow into flower beds and vegetable gardens adjacent from infested lawns.

Management: Currently, chemical herbicides are the best management option of ground ivy. Many broadleaf weeds are managed by using the herbicide 2,4-D. However, ground ivy management is best accomplished by using 2,4-D plus another additive. The recommended products are 2,4-D plus dichlorprop (Weedone DPC) and 2,4-D plus triclopyr (Chaser, Turflon II Amine). Spring and fall applications may be made. Repeat applications may be necessary. These products may be used only on established turfgrass areas. Wait for two mowings before applying these products on newly seeded areas. Wait for three to four weeks after applying either of these herbicides before putting down any new seed in the lawn.

There has been a good deal of interest in using borax to control ground ivy. The University of Minnesota Extension Service provides the following information regarding borax and ground ivy. Boron, the active ingredient in borax, is needed in very small quantities by plants as a nutrient. However, amounts even slightly over what is needed are toxic to plants. Borax can be used to manage ground ivy because it is more sensitive to boron than turfgrass. Small amounts of borax can kill ground ivy without permanently harming the lawn. The lawn may turn brown slightly, but it will resume normal growth. One problem is that boron does not dissipate or break down like most chemical herbicides. If it is applied repeatedly or at too strong a rate, the soil may not be able to grow anything until the boron leaches out. That may take years!

The use of boron in Cornell trials has produced mixed results. Therefore, at this time, Cornell Cooperative Extension does not recommend the use of boron to manage ground ivy.

Adapted from "Weeds in the landscape: ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*)" by Joanne Gruttadaurio, 1983.

Pest. Rec. 141RTG 1998. University of Minnesota information found at www.extension.umn.edu

Fact Sheet 7.471, last revision March 29, 1999.

This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or your regional DEC office.

READ THE LABEL BEFORE APPLYING ANY PESTICIDE.