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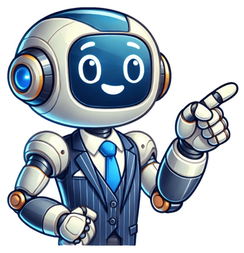

Poa annua (annual bluegrass), Poa trivialis (rough bluegrass) and creeping bentgrass are becoming common weeds in athletic fields and lawns. These weeds are important to distinguish because they require different controls. Poa annua: a winter annual that is lighter, more apple green than other lawn species. It is just past its aggressive seedhead stage, but you'll likely still find seedheads in any patch of annual bluegrass. Most common in shade and/or wet or irrigated areas. Control in lawns is easiest by no summer irrigation which should kill or at least thin this plant with drought, followed by a preemergence herbicide applied in late August. Irrigation and aggressive fall fertility should help the desired species fill in, but this treatment may be needed over a number of years. Poa trivialis: a perennial that tends to get infected by dollar spot and then go dormant in late June through August. Also most common in shaded or wet areas, but you will rarely seed a seedhead. Control is with Roundup or 2 to 3 applications of sulfosulfuron (Certainty) every two weeks starting in early to mid-June. Desired species should fill in if patches are not too large. Like Poa annua, aggressive fall fertility should help the desired species fill in and this treatment may also be needed over a number of years. Creeping bentgrass is a vigorous perennial that will grow over the top of other cool-season lawn grasses. It is fine-bladed and tends to form a poorly-rooted mat in lawns, so it shows signs of drought stress (browning) with first days of prolonged dry weather. Current control is with 2 to 3 applications of Roundup followed by reseeding. However, creeping bentgrass will regrow from stolons for many years and so this may need repeating in 3 to 5 years. Excellent selective control will be feasible with Syngenta's Tenacity, which will be available for homelawns and sports fields next year. So you should wait until that's available before trying to control creeping bentgrass. There is much more information including clues to identification and more controls in the following publications: It can also persist in full sun on golf courses and athletic fields that are routinely irrigated. Its yellow-green color, coarse-textured leaf blades, and patchy appearance are often objectionable to homeowners and professional turf managers in stands of cool-season turfgrass. Commercial cultivars of P. trivialis are available for overseeding bermudagrass putting greens for winter play on golf courses in the southeastern portion of the United States and are occasionally used for heavily shaded and poorly drained lawns in northern states. Commercial cultivars are typically darker green and finer textured than volunteer weedy types found in lawns. Fig. 1. Patches of P. trivialis infesting a shaded lawn in western Pennsylvania. Photo courtesy of Joseph Hertrich Fig. 2. Patches of P. trivialis infesting an athletic field in central Pennsylvania. Photo: Peter Landschoot, Penn State Life Cycle and Growth Habit Poa trivialis is a member of the Poaceae family and has a perennial life cycle. It produces runners or stolons, which allow it to spread horizontally and creep over desirable grasses forming roughly circular patches. During periods of cool, moist conditions in spring, the vertical growth rate of P. trivialis can be 2-3 times faster than Kentucky bluegrass. In non-irrigated turf, during periods of high-temperature stress and/or drought in summer, P. trivialis begins to decline and foliage turns brown, leaving poor quality turf and openings for other weeds to develop. Patches of P. trivialis usually recover when cool temperatures return in fall. Fig. 3. Patch of P. trivialis in a Kentucky bluegrass lawn during early spring, showing extensive vertical growth (left), and declining P. trivialis in full sun during mid-summer (right). Photos: Peter Landschoot, Penn State Identification Poa trivialis has leaf characteristics similar to Kentucky bluegrass, including a prominent midvein running lengthwise in the center of the blade, and a keeled leaf tip. However, leaves of P. trivialis have a glossy underside, whereas Kentucky bluegrass leaf surfaces are not glossy or shiny. Other identifying features include a papery, membranous tissue called a ligule that occurs at the junction of the leaf blade and leaf sheath and stolons that root at nodes. Stems are produced in April and exhibit a reddish color at the base. Root systems are relatively shallow and can be easily pulled from the soil. Seedheads are rarely observed in mowed turf, but can form in non-mowed areas in May and June. Foliage of P. trivialis typically has a yellow-green hue. Fig. 4. Leaves of P. trivialis showing glossy underside surfaces (abaxial leaf surface). Photo: Peter Landschoot, Penn State Fig. 5. Papery, membranous ligules at the junction of the leaf blades and sheaths. Photo: Peter Landschoot, Penn State Fig. 6. Stems of P. trivialis with reddish-purple color at the base. Photo: Peter Landschoot, Penn State Fig. 7. Stolon of P. trivialis. Photo: Peter Landschoot, Penn State Cultural Management Poa trivialis seed can be introduced into new turf stands accidentally as a contaminant in bags of turfgrass seed, or from cultivation equipment and soil containing small stolon pieces. Use of P. trivialis-free seed for new turf establishments and removing debris from cultivation equipment after use can help to reduce the potential for introduction of this weed species into lawns, parks, sports turf, and golf courses. Although there is no practical way to detect P. trivialis seed or stolons in soil, using soils from sites with no previous history of infestation can lessen the chances of contamination of turfgrass sites. If P. trivialis is introduced into turf areas, the rate of visible patch development can vary depending on turf density, amount of shade, and soil moisture. Typically, patches are slow to develop in turf stands that are well-drained, not irrigated, and have little or no shade. Improving turf density through fertilization, removing trees or trimming branches to reduce shading, reducing irrigation, and use of turfgrasses well-adapted to site conditions will help slow the spread of P. trivialis but may not provide effective suppression once this weed is well established. If only a few small P. trivialis plants are infesting a lawn, they can be removed by hand pulling; however, all leaf, stem, and stolon material must be eliminated to prevent regrowth. Chemical Control Poa trivialis plants rarely produce seedheads and seed in mowed turf; thus, preemergence herbicides will not help to control this species. Unfortunately, there are no postemergence selective herbicides labeled for use in Pennsylvania that can remove P. trivialis from lawns, parks, and sports turf. Killing patches or the entire turf stand with non-selective glyphosate-containing products is the only way to eliminate this weed grass when significant contamination has occurred. When attempting to eliminate individual patches with glyphosate, treat at least 12 inches around the outside of the visible P. trivialis patch to make sure foliage and stolons obscured by desirable turfgrass are killed. Because glyphosate will also kill desirable grasses, treated areas will have to be re-seeded. Poa trivialis, commonly known as rough bluegrass, is one of the most stubborn weeds I see in cool-season lawns like tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, and perennial ryegrass. It loves moist soils and thrives in moderate shade, making it a nightmare for homeowners trying to maintain a healthy lawn. If left unchecked, Poa trivialis spreads aggressively and creates unsightly light green patches that turn dormant and brown in the heat of mid-summer. Here's how I identify, treat, and eliminate Poa trivialis for my Lawn Phix customers. Poa trivialis is a perennial grass that thrives in cool climates. Unlike desirable turfgrasses, it grows aggressively in shaded, wet conditions but becomes dormant in hot weather, leaving bare spots in your lawn. While it's occasionally used for golf courses and overseeding, Poa trivialis becomes a weed grass in residential lawns. It spreads through rhizomes and stolons, making it tough to control. Identifying Poa trivialis is the first step to managing it. Here's what to look for: Color: Poa trivialis is lighter green than most turfgrass, making patches stand out. Growth Habit: It grows low to the ground and spreads via stolons. Texture: The blades are fine-textured and soft. Dormancy: Poa trivialis turns brown and dormant in summer, creating visible bare spots. Similar Weeds: Don't confuse it with Poa annua (annual bluegrass). While both have boat-shaped leaf tips, Poa trivialis has fewer visible seed heads and spreads through stolons. Tip: If you notice thin, patchy areas of light green grass that look worse in the summer, it's likely Poa trivialis. Eliminating Poa trivialis requires a multi-step approach. Unfortunately, no selective herbicides specifically target it without harming the surrounding turf. Here's what I recommend: The most reliable way to remove Poa trivialis is to spot-treat the patches with a non-selective herbicide like glyphosate (Roundup). Be careful—glyphosate will kill everything it touches, including desirable grass. Steps: Identify and isolate Poa trivialis patches. Apply glyphosate carefully using a sponge applicator or sprayer. Wait 7-14 days for the weed to die. Reseed or re-sod the treated areas with your desired turfgrass. While Tenacity (mesotrione) won't eliminate Poa trivialis, it can weaken it significantly. I've used it successfully to slow down growth and limit spreading. Apply Tenacity in the spring when Poa trivialis is actively growing. Repeat treatments as needed to bleach out and stress the weed. Hand-pulling or digging out Poa trivialis can work for small areas, though it's labor-intensive. Remove the entire plant, including stolons and roots, to prevent regrowth. Preventing Poa trivialis is easier than eliminating it. Here's how I help customers keep it from invading their lawns: Mow High: Keep your grass at 3-4 inches to shade the soil and discourage Poa trivialis seeds from germinating. Taller grass creates a competitive advantage for healthy turf. Water Deeply but Infrequently: Avoid frequent, shallow watering, which encourages shallow-rooted weeds like Poa trivialis. Water your lawn deeply (1 inch per week) to promote healthy, deep roots. Overseed Annually: Overseed your lawn with bunch-type grasses like tall fescue or perennial ryegrass. Dense, healthy turf crowds out weeds and prevents Poa trivialis from spreading. Improve Drainage: Since Poa trivialis thrives in moist soils, aerate compacted areas and address poor drainage to keep water moving through the soil profile. Avoid Contaminated Seed: Use high-quality, certified seed blends to avoid introducing Poa trivialis seeds into your lawn. Spot-Treat Early: At the first sign of Poa trivialis, act quickly. Early treatment prevents it from taking over larger areas of your lawn. What chemical kills Poa trivialis?Glyphosate is the most effective chemical for killing Poa trivialis, but it will also kill surrounding grass. Spot-treat carefully and reseed afterward. Does Tenacity herbicide kill Poa trivialis?Tenacity won't kill Poa trivialis completely, but it can weaken the weed and slow its spread when applied in spring. How do you remove Poa trivialis without herbicides?For small infestations, dig out the plant manually, ensuring you remove the entire root system. Overseed afterward to fill bare spots. How does Poa trivialis spread?Poa trivialis spreads through stolons, which are above-ground stems that allow the weed to creep across your lawn. Will Poa trivialis die in summer?Poa trivialis goes dormant in the summer heat, turning brown and creating bare spots, but it doesn't die. It will re-emerge in cooler temperatures. Poa trivialis, or rough bluegrass, is a tough weed to eliminate, but with persistence, you can reclaim your lawn. Spot-treat with glyphosate, overseed with high-quality grass seed, and maintain proper mowing and watering habits to prevent its return. For customers at Lawn Phix, I've found that the key to Poa trivialis control is early identification, quick action, and a focus on healthy, dense turf. Don't let this invasive grass ruin your lawn—take control today! Every homeowner hates weeds and wants to stop them appearing in their lawn. But if you don't know the names and characteristics of the different lawn weeds that may appear, it'll be difficult to get rid of them. In my experience every weed is a little bit different, and to properly address it you need to identify what it is, and understand its growth and reproduction characteristics to properly remediate it. Today, I'll compare poa trivialis vs poa annua to explain the differences between these two common (and difficult) weeds. I'll help you identify which one you've got, and I'll give you a game plan for how to eliminate each type of "poa" from your lawn. This article was last updated on by Lawn Chick Owner Sarah JamesonArticle content reviewed for accuracy by Horticulturist Arthur Davidson, A.S. Poa annua and poa trivialis are both grassy weeds, but there are differences between them (both in terms of how they look, and in terms of how they grow). Let's dive into our exploration of these unwanted plants that all too commonly appear on American lawns. Both Poa Annua and Poa Trivialis are types of grass that many homeowners find undesirable (because they look different from most desirable turfgrasses we want in our lawn). The main difference between poa trivialis and poa annua is that the former (poa trivialis) is a perennial weed (meaning it will return year after year), and the latter (poa annua) is an annual weed (meaning it will die back and return via seeds that it drops in your lawn). As a cool-season perennial grass, poa trivialis will die back in the heat of the summer but then rejuvenate when the weather becomes more favorable. An annual is a plant that only lives for one season, and this applies to poa annua. Beyond the differences in their life-cycle, there are also significant differences between poa annua and poa trivialis from an appearance standpoint. Understanding these differences will help you correctly identify these weeds and know how to treat them. After all, you must know which weed you're dealing with in order to give it the right treatment for elimination and control. What works for one won't work for the other. As we touched on earlier, poa trivialis is a perennial weed (and grass). You'll find it at its most visible in the spring and fall months, as it thrives in cooler temperatures. Lawns with a lot of shade are likely to end up with a poa trivialis problem. You'll sometimes hear people call poa trivialis "rough bluegrass." Sometimes you'll even hear lawn care experts use this terminology. The light green color of Poa Trivialis makes it easy to identify in lawns Poa trivialis stands out and can usually be identified by its light green color. If you have poa trivialis in your lawn, it will stay alive and come back in subsequent years. This is because it's a perennial plant. When it comes to identifying poa trivialis, one of the things to look for is areas of grass that are a lighter green in color than your turfgrass, but the grass will be closer in its growth habit to that of the surrounding turfgrass than Poa Annua (which will develop seedheads sooner). If your turfgrass is one of the dark green varieties, poa trivialis will be especially obvious, as in the photo above. Have you noticed any inexplicable bare spots on your lawn in the summer heat? This may be a result of poa trivialis. That is because during the hot weather, poa trivialis enters dormancy and when it does so, it dies back so thoroughly that you can't see any sign of it. As poa trivialis is a cool-season grass, it is prevalent in northern areas of the United States. So while you'll notice the light green color when it's growing in the fall and spring, during the summer when your lawn may be able to tolerate the heat and drought, the Poa Triv won't be able to, and it will go dormant and leave thin and bare patches. The leaves of poa trivialis are shaped like a boat or canoe, which is another way to help to identify it and pick it out from traditional turfgrass and some other types of grassy weeds. Also, Poa trivialis tends to become a problem in areas of lawn that have a lot of shade or that are too moist (lack good drainage). As implied by its name, poa annua is an annual weed. You'll sometimes hear people call it "annual bluegrass." But unlike the popular Kentucky Bluegrass we all know and love, "annual bluegrass" is a weed. When it comes to appearance, this annual weed has many similarities to poa trivialis. It is also light green in color, and a grassy weed. In my experience the easiest way for homeowners to differentiate the two is tied to how they reproduce. As an annual weed, Poa Annua needs to produce seeds (and lots of them) to survive and thrive. As a result it makes seedheads more often and faster. If you see a light green grassy weed in your lawn but it's growing similarly to your perennial turfgrass in your lawn, then it's probably the perennial Poa Trivialis. If you see a light green grassy weed in your lawn, but it's regularly developing seed heads if you don't mow frequently, then it's probably Poa Annua. Another thing to note as a difference that can help you properly identify if you have Poa Annua vs Poa Trivialis in your lawn is the leaves. Poa annua leaves often have the same shape (like a boat) as poa trivialis, but they're a bit more textured. This makes it more noticeable. Both poa trivialis and poa annua spread into and throughout your lawn in different ways. Poa annua spreads via seed (as mentioned). Poa trivialis, by contrast, spreads via stolons. This last point on Poa Trivialis is important and deserves a little more attention. I hear from quite a few homeowners with Kentucky Bluegrass lawns, and they mis-identify their Poa Trivialis weed issue as simply a disease problem with their turf. A closer look at how each type of grass spreads laterally will help you properly identify what is going on. Kentucky Bluegrass spreads laterally via Rhizomes (underground runners). Rough Bluegrass (or Poa Trivialis) spreads via stolons, which are lateral shoots that travel above the soil. In this illustration you can see how Rhizomes and Stolons differ. Use this information to identify if you have Kentucky Bluegrass with a disease issue or Poa Trivialis (a weed) causing light and discolored patches in your yard. As there are significant differences between poa trivialis and poa annua, there are also differences in the best approaches for eliminating these weed grasses from your lawn. And their close relation to popular turfgrass varieties (like Kentucky Bluegrass) makes selection and use of herbicides a challenge. Here you see the seed heads of Poa Annua – there's more separation and air gaps between the seeds than what you would observe with Poa Trivialis or traditional Kentucky Bluegrass It's important that you treat your weed issue carefully, as you don't want to hurt your turfgrass while getting rid of these grassy weeds. Do you have poa trivilias on your lawn? You've got to get rid of it and prevent it from reappearing next year. I like to say that the best defense against difficult weeds like Poa Triv is a good offense. As with other weeds, keeping your lawn healthy and lush will help crowd out the poa trivialis ("rough bluegrass") weed, and can help prevent it from being an issue in the first place. As poa trivialis is such a stubborn weed, you will probably have to use a non-selective herbicide. This means an herbicide so strong that it will kill any plant, including your Turfgrass. Once your lawn dies, you can start over. This is challenging for homeowners, because if you're not precise enough with application (or if you have rampant Poa Triv issues), you may kill large areas of your lawn. In fact, it's so likely that you'll damage at least some of the turfgrass, you should be ready to replant parts of your lawn, or maybe even all of it. When people first think of a non-selective herbicide to use to combat Poa Trivialis they'll think of Roundup. But let's be real – if you haven't already associated Roundup (Glyphosate) with cancer, you soon will. That's why I prefer either using a strong herbicidal vinegar (not your everyday household kind – I like this one on Amazon), or a herbicidal soap from Sunday called Weed Warrior (my readers can take 15% off with code LAWNCHICK2024). Whatever you use (even natural products), spray on a calm day, and wear full PPE (long sleeves, closed shoes, gloves, eye protection, and a good mask or respirator). You should use cultural controls (including lawncare for a lush and healthy lawn) to help prevent poa trivialis becoming a problem on your lawn. Even if you already have a limited amount of this weed on your lawn, taking proper care of your lawn and changing the conditions will help to fight it without herbicide. You can also use pre-emergent herbicides, to help prevent poa trivialis problems in your lawn. But again, make sure you read the instructions and know whether it is a selective or non-selective herbicide. Here are useful tips for stopping poa trivialis from growing on your lawn. Like poa annua, poa trivialis prefers moist areas, especially excessively moist areas of soil. So, make sure that you give your lawn the right amount of water, never too much. Don't mow too frequently. When you do water your turfgrass, however, water it deeply. Provide enough water so that it soaks down about two inches into the soil. After watering, leave your lawn enough days for the top layer of soil to dry out. Once this happens, water it again. This is a great way to avoid overwatering. At the same time, you've got to make sure that you don't deprive your turfgrass of the water it needs. Different kinds of turfgrass need different levels of watering. Find out which grass species you have and how much water it needs. You should also consider your region's climate and weather. If there is drought, for example, your lawn will need more water. Overseeding with bunchgrasses can help to crowd out poa trivialis. Do this in the spring months to enjoy the intended effect. Also, aeration and overseeding every year will help to keep your turfgrass healthy, helping to keep out weed growth. Many homeowners use pre-emergent herbicides to fight their poa annua problem, but you will have to select the right product and you'll probably need to apply it twice a year (in the spring and in the fall) at first. This is because for pre-emergent to be effective, you need to apply it before any poa annua seeds already in your lawn's soil is expected to germinate. Poa annua germination happens when the soil is cooler than 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Examples of effective pre-emergent herbicides for preventing poa annua include Barricade 4FL, Hi-Yield Weed and Grass Stopper, and (my favorite) Dimension 2EW. Read the instructions on the packaging, to ensure you are using it correctly. If you're concerned about applying herbicides to your lawn regularly, you can try an organic, corn gluten meal based product instead. Use the same lawncare steps we talked about earlier to help prevent poa annua on your lawn. Of all the lawncare tips we provide here at Lawn Chick, adjusting your mower deck height to a higher setting (in terms of grass height) may help the most as a natural way to combat weeds like Poa Annua. I have a tall fescue lawn, and typically maintain a height of three or four inches. This improves the health of my lawn, but also shades out annual weed seeds that need light to germinate and grow. Of course, you should also fertilize your lawn and keep it healthy and thick. This combination of dense, tall grass is the most effective (and cost effective) way to combat annual weeds in my experience as a homeowner and full time lawn care blogger. Remember, a lush, beautiful lawn is one of the most powerful tools for fighting weed growth. Making a lawn fertilization schedule isn't about vanity or showing off, it's just one of the most cost-effective ways of taking care of your yard (and preventing headaches in the long run). Grab my free cheat-sheet if you'd like a ready-to-use gameplan. The reality is that poa trivialis and poa annua are extremely similar, and because of their names, some of the information provided online about them is confusing (and some people mix them up). Here's a summary of the key points covered in today's article: One of the main differences between these plants is the fact that poa trivialis is a perennial weed and poa annua is an annual weed. To tell the difference between the two you'll want to look at seed head development (Poa Annua develops seed heads rapidly and constantly since it's how it survives). The leaf shape is similar on both plants, but Poa Annua leaves have more texture. You can tell Poa Trivialis apart from Kentucky Bluegrass because it is a light green color, goes brown and dormant in summer, and spreads via stolons (compared to rhizomes with KBG). Regular and well-timed pre-emergent herbicide applications are important to prevent both Poa Trivialis and Poa Annua. You can get your Poa Annua under control within a year or two with 2x annual pre-emergent applications, but if you want an immediate fix, your best bet is an herbicide called Blindside (available on DoMyOwn or on Amazon). It can't be shipped everywhere, though, so it won't work for everyone. You can prevent Poa Trivialis with annual applications of pre-emergent, but to kill it in your lawn you'll have to use a non-selective herbicide that will kill the surrounding grass as well. I recommend Weed Warrior, a natural herbicidal soap from Sunday (save 15% with code LAWNCHICK2024) instead of Glyphosate for health and safety reasons. With either weed, you don't want to put off dealing with your weed problem. The more you procrastinate, the more difficult the problem will be to deal with. These are both tough lawn weeds. Have you ever planted a Tall Fescue lawn from seed and stumbled upon an uninvited guest that looks like Tall Fescue, but somehow seems out of place? If so, you might be looking at Poa trivialis weeds, aka rough bluegrass, roughstalk bluegrass, or known by landscapers as "Poa triv" for short. Yes, this invader is related to Poa annua, aka annual poa grass or annual bluegrass. However, Poa trivialis is a taller-growing, perennial weed that will come back year after year in cool climates, even after it dies back in the summer heat, and it requires different weed control methods. Roughstalk bluegrass is renowned as a common stowaway in non-Blue Tag Certified Tall Fescue seed and stands out as an eyesore in an otherwise pristine Tall Fescue lawn. It's hugely distracting and frustrates even the chillest of gardeners. For this reason, we recommend purchasing only Blue Tag Certified Tall Fescue seed, such as our Elite Tall Fescue seed, because it is certified to be free of weed seeds. In October's installment of our weed of the month series, we'll teach you how to identify, manage, and prevent this hitchhiker weed that's a particular bandit in Tall Fescue lawns grown from seed. Family: Poaceae - the grass family Habit: Spreads via stolons to form patches Roots: No rhizomes are present Stems: Smooth, round, creeping Leaves: Pale green to blue-green with boat-shaped tips Flowers: Feathery, open panicle during late spring Fruit/seed: Small, round seeds in a compact cluster "Poa triv" is a cool-season grass that's native to Europe, but has naturalized across many parts of the US and can be found anywhere in zones 3 to 7 where Tall Fescue lawns are grown from seed. You'll find rough bluegrass naturalizing in compacted soils in wet lawns, forests, roadsides, and ditches. It grows happily alongside Tall Fescue, likewise thriving in moist, shaded areas with only a few hours of direct sun and in sunnier yards. Patches of light green rough bluegrass stand out in Tall Fescue lawn. Photo from Brandon Starnes, Outside Sales, Super-Sod of Charlotte. Roughstalk bluegrass grows faster than the surrounding Tall Fescue lawn, so it stands out not only because of the lighter green color but also its taller height. This and the header photo are from Dustin Carter, Store Manager, Super-Sod of Raleigh. Eat It or Treat It In my books and internet searches, I find no creative ideas for human consumption of roughstalk bluegrass, though some argue that most grasses in the Poaceae at least have edible seeds. There are citations of certain European grassland insects that rely on Poa trivialis for habitat and forage, but I don't see information about that for the United States. If anyone has information about human and animal/insect foraging, please let us know in the comments. Even if you and I don't want roughstalk bluegrass in our Tall Fescue lawns, there are others (mostly in cool climates) who purchase Poa trivialis for winter overseeding of pastures, roadsides, and golf courses. If you're caring for a Tall Fescue lawn and would rather not see this distracting weed, here are our weed management tips specific to rough bluegrass. Weed Prevention: Blue Tag Certified Seed: The ONLY way to prevent Poa triv from invading your lawn is to purchase Blue Tag Certified seed. The Blue Tag Certification for Tall Fescue seed ensures 99% purity and freedom from weed seeds such as rough bluegrass. Pre-emergent Herbicide: Sadly, pre-emergent herbicide, which usually works so well for weed prevention, doesn't work for preventing roughstalk bluegrass in Tall Fescue lawns. The reason is because this weed is commonly found in bags of non-Blue Tag Certified seed, thus Poa trivialis seeds are being spread at the same time as Tall Fescue seeds. Pre-emergent would prevent not only the Poa triv seeds from germinating but your Tall Fescue seeds as well. Roughstalk bluegrass proliferates in compacted, wet areas, so if you have an infestation in your Tall Fescue, consider aerification and topdressing with compost in the fall or winter. This practice will help with bluegrass weed control for the next year. Manual Weeding: Hand pull: Due to the runners, it will take extra time to hand weed once it's established, so before the patches spread, you can take some time hand-pulling the roughstalk bluegrass before it spreads too much to handle. This will require a heaping shovelful of patience. Mowing: Mowing doesn't work very well for Poa trivialis because the weed still stands out in Tall Fescue lawns due to its lighter green color and faster growth rate. However, we still recommend regular mowing to keep it somewhat at bay! Summer Heat: Summer heat will stunt roughstalk bluegrass and cause it to languish and go dormant, and maybe even kill it. Heat might eliminate it in the warmest areas of Super-Sod's footprint, such as from Atlanta to Charlotte and Raleigh. However, in cooler areas north of those cities, summer heat may only cause it to temporarily die back, and then it will come roaring back to life when temperatures cool off in the fall. At that point, you'll need to consider a non-selective herbicide and patching the bare spots, as explained in the next bullet point. Chemical Weed Control: Post-emergent Non-Selective Herbicide: The only way to get rid of established Poa trivialis is with a non-selective herbicide. The downside is that it will also kill the surrounding Tall Fescue lawn because this type of herbicide kills any plant it comes in contact with. However, you can patch those bare spots with Blue Tag Certified Tall Fescue seed from us or with individual rolls of Tall Fescue sod for a quick fix. For a deeper dive into understanding Poa trivialis, the following resources are enlightening. There is little information on this weed in online University resources in Super-Sod's footprint besides from NC State, so I've posted links to Universities in cooler climates where rough bluegrass is a greater concern. Questions? Leave a comment below. If you're a weed aficionado like me, check back here for future Weeds of the Month. Until then, happy weeding! Poa trivialis, commonly known as rough bluegrass, is one of the most stubborn weeds I see in cool-season lawns like tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, and perennial ryegrass. It loves moist soils and thrives in moderate shade, making it a nightmare for homeowners trying to maintain a healthy lawn. If left unchecked, Poa trivialis spreads aggressively and creates unsightly light green patches that turn dormant and brown in the heat of mid-summer. Here's how I identify, treat, and eliminate Poa trivialis for my Lawn Phix customers. Poa trivialis is a perennial grass that thrives in cool climates. Unlike desirable turfgrasses, it grows aggressively in shaded, wet conditions but becomes dormant in hot weather, leaving bare spots in your lawn. While it's occasionally used for golf courses and overseeding, Poa trivialis becomes a weed grass in residential lawns. It spreads through rhizomes and stolons, making it tough to control. Identifying Poa trivialis is the first step to managing it. Here's what to look for: Color: Poa trivialis is lighter green than most turfgrass, making patches stand out. Growth Habit: It grows low to the ground and spreads via stolons. Texture: The blades are fine-textured and soft. Dormancy: Poa trivialis turns brown and dormant in summer, creating visible bare spots. Similar Weeds: Don't confuse it with Poa annua (annual bluegrass). While both have boat-shaped leaf tips, Poa trivialis has fewer visible seed heads and spreads through stolons. Tip: If you notice thin, patchy areas of light green grass that look worse in the summer, it's likely Poa trivialis. Eliminating Poa trivialis requires a multi-step approach. Unfortunately, no selective herbicides specifically target it without harming the surrounding turf. Here's what I recommend: The most reliable way to remove Poa trivialis is to spot-treat the patches with a non-selective herbicide like glyphosate (Roundup). Be careful—glyphosate will kill everything it touches, including desirable grass. Steps: Identify and isolate Poa trivialis patches. Apply glyphosate carefully using a sponge applicator or sprayer. Wait 7-14 days for the weed to die. Reseed or re-sod the treated areas with your desired turfgrass. While Tenacity (mesotrione) won't eliminate Poa trivialis, it can weaken it significantly. I've used it successfully to slow down growth and limit spreading. Apply Tenacity in the spring when Poa trivialis is actively growing. Repeat treatments as needed to bleach out and stress the weed. Hand-pulling or digging out Poa trivialis can work for small areas, though it's labor-intensive. Remove the entire plant, including stolons and roots, to prevent regrowth. Preventing Poa trivialis is easier than eliminating it. Here's how I help customers keep it from invading their lawns: Mow High: Keep your grass at 3-4 inches to shade the soil and discourage Poa trivialis seeds from germinating. Taller grass creates a competitive advantage for healthy turf. Water Deeply but Infrequently: Avoid frequent, shallow watering, which encourages shallow-rooted weeds like Poa trivialis. Water your lawn deeply (1 inch per week) to promote healthy, deep roots. Overseed Annually: Overseed your lawn with bunch-type grasses like tall fescue or perennial ryegrass. Dense, healthy turf crowds out weeds and prevents Poa trivialis from spreading. Improve Drainage: Since Poa trivialis thrives in moist soils, aerate compacted areas and address poor drainage to keep water moving through the soil profile. Avoid Contaminated Seed: Use high-quality, certified seed blends to avoid introducing Poa trivialis seeds into your lawn. Spot-Treat Early: At the first sign of Poa trivialis, act quickly. Early treatment prevents it from taking over larger areas of your lawn. What chemical kills Poa trivialis?Glyphosate is the most effective chemical for killing Poa trivialis, but it will also kill surrounding grass. Spot-treat carefully and reseed afterward. Does Tenacity herbicide kill Poa trivialis?Tenacity won't kill Poa trivialis completely, but it can weaken the weed and slow its spread when applied in spring. How do you remove Poa trivialis without herbicides?For small infestations, dig out the plant manually, ensuring you remove the entire root system. Overseed afterward to fill bare spots. How does Poa trivialis spread?Poa trivialis spreads through stolons, which are above-ground stems that allow the weed to creep across your lawn. Will Poa trivialis die in summer?Poa trivialis goes dormant in the summer heat, turning brown and creating bare spots, but it doesn't die. It will re-emerge in cooler temperatures. Poa trivialis, or rough bluegrass, is a tough weed to eliminate, but with persistence, you can reclaim your lawn. Spot-treat with glyphosate, overseed with high-quality grass seed, and maintain proper mowing and watering habits to prevent its return. For customers at Lawn Phix, I've found that the key to Poa trivialis control is early identification, quick action, and a focus on healthy, dense turf. Don't let this invasive grass ruin your lawn—take control today! Poa trivialis is a rough-sheathed blue lawn, a non-native European species, that grows in low, soggy to wet areas like stream banks to springs throughout New England. The sandpapery sheaths, the leaf base around the stem, give it its common term. Note that it's a perennial grass, meaning it returns year after year. It prefers the cooler temperatures and wet spring soil, but as summer heats up, it goes inert, turning brown and disappearing. After which, it leaves bare patches on your lawn that fool you into believing it's dead. But only appears to be dead; beneath the stems, the soil, and the roots that are simply hedging their bets, hoping for chilly weather to allow them to re-emerge and take charge on your lawn. Why you'd not like Poa Trivialis on your lawn Poa trivialis, commonly referred to as Poa triv, is a perennial weed plant that you would not want to grow in one's fescue lawn. With its cousin, Poa annua, also known as annual bluegrass, they are two of the most problematic lawn weeds to regulate and treat. What is the best way to identify it? Poa trivialis recognition necessitates a close examination of the plant. The weed is a lighter green than your grass, making it unattractive because of its apparent presence among the dark lawns. To worsen, huge bare spots appear when its blades drop dead, and the plant becomes dormant during summer. But face the facts: the rough bluegrass is lying low. The issue is that even undergrowth control, it could be hard to differentiate from that other perennial ryegrass, commonly known as Lolium perenne or bluegrasses. What is the root of the problem? Drought stress and heavy traffic are not good for rough bluegrass. When the hot weather sets in and you begin using your grass more frequently, this is when the phone calls are trying to pile up. Because of the foot traffic and higher temperatures, a spot of poa trivialis can resemble a turf illness or grub-damaged grass. Poa trivialis thrives in a narrow range of conditions. Once the season is cooler and moist, it develops most aggressively. You can find huge strands of grass in moist soils. But since poa trivialis likes moist conditions, it will most probably expand in shady areas of your grass. How to treat Poa trivialis Controlling Poa trivialis should begin as soon as you notice it on the lawn. It will only spread and gradually take over the entire lawn if you don't do something about it. To limit rough terrain, growing environments and cultural management are the most important factors to consider. Rough bluegrass will likely outpace other turfgrasses in a sleazy, damp location, making control extremely difficult. It will be less competitive in properly-drained soils, which are watered only to avoid the tremendous pressure of beneficial organisms, and infestations could perhaps decrease over time. Although one isolated report revealed that Fe fertilization and foliar Mg reduced modest outbreaks of rough bluegrass seeds, there are no more reports of similar outcomes, so this tactic is safe to dismiss. Velocity The only weedkiller currently approved for rough bluegrass selective control in cool-season grass fields is Velocity, scientifically termed bispyribac-sodium; Nufarm. Many studies have demonstrated its efficacy in various applications and the risk of rough bluegrass restoration, which limits control. Velocity's efficacy rises with air temperatures above 75 degrees F; therefore, it's recommended to start treatment in the spring and continue through the summer. Non-selective control The bluegrass is most constantly controlled using glyphosate accompanied by reseeding, even though it's hard to hear. Even so, it is not an easy task. Applying a nonselective herbicide to rough bluegrass in late summer corresponds to the suggested fall sowing for cool-season lawns, but spring provides the greatest control. Tenacity Tenacity, or rather mesotrione, Syngenta, is a Poa triv herbicide discovered to be largely unsuccessful in managing rough bluegrass. However, most users have reported utilizing Tenacity to significantly weaken Poa trivialis, causing it to propagate much more slowly. An integrated technique To fully control rough terrain, you will require various interventions. Control will be much more challenging in shaded zones with frequent rainfall since the cultural strategies for control are already limited. Take into account caring for rough bluegrass if it doesn't suffer too much during the summer. If you want to regulate rough bluegrass, you need to prioritize limiting irrigation and improve drainage over it. Don't be frightened to get physical with your desirable species because they are more considerate of traffic than the rough bluegrass. How to prevent Poa trivialis Poa trivialis is difficult to eradicate, but you can use cultural regulations to keep your grass bulky and healthy when you have it under regulation. It helps prevent Poa trivialis and other weeds from competing with the lush, long-lasting grass. Don't mow your lawn too short. Maintain a grass height of at least three inches or more. It shades the soil better as it grows taller, preventing weed seeds from germinating. Mowing your lawn too short stresses it out, making it vulnerable to weed intrusions. * Water in a proper manner. Once it gets to misting a well-defined lawn, depth and infrequency are the aims of the game. Roots must grow healthy and deep; however, if you water the lawn too often, it won't waste energy drilling down for water content, and it will be too tiring to resist weeds. * Each spring, overseed or reseed with bunchgrasses. They won't spread because they don't have stolons or rhizomes, so they'll stay put. With time, they dominate other grasses on the lawn. * Accept it. Wave the white flag as a last resort. Consider nurturing your rough bluegrass and allowing it to completely cover the lawn as resilient chilly-weather grass if that doesn't die during summer.