



How Do I Control This Weed?

WEED OF THE MONTH (July 2010)

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Photos by GCMGA

Common Name: Virginia Buttonweed

Scientific Name: *Diodia virginiana*

A friend asked for assistance in identifying a weed in their St. Augustine lawn. Of course he was also interested in options for getting rid of (or at least controlling) this weed.

His troublesome weed is commonly known as Virginia buttonweed (*Diodia virginiana*). Virginia buttonweed is a vigorous, low growing and vining plant that produces small white flowers at its leaf axils.

We talked about how it is found in the southeastern United States and is troublesome in golf courses and other turf grass areas. This spreading perennial weed has opposite leaves. Virginia buttonweed proliferates through extensive underground rhizomes and is particularly troublesome in wet or moist areas.

How do you control this weed? I have seen two control measures for St. Augustine grass. One is by diligently pulling them from the ground by hand. You must pull roots and all since plants will readily reproduce from stem and root fragments in addition to seeds. If you see Virginia buttonweed starting to bloom, do not wait—pull the plants up before they go to seed! This method has proven to be best for both environmental and final results. However, this approach is effective and practical only for limited or small size infestations and when plants are diligently pulled on a frequent basis over a 4-6 week period. The areas must be regularly inspected over the remainder of the growing season to remove any newly emerged plants. This must be repeated again next summer for complete eradication.

The second option is by application of post emergence broad leaf herbicides. Tests have shown herbicides containing dicamba (such as Image) may help. Repeated applications will be necessary for complete control. Be sure to read and follow all label directions provided by manufacturer. No pre-emergent herbicides have shown to kill or control Virginia buttonweed.

To help prevent Virginia buttonweed from getting in your St. Augustine grass, we have learned a thick and healthy lawn that is properly mowed and fertilized will greatly decrease the possibility of Virginia buttonweed getting a foothold. Since the Virginia buttonweed plant prefers moist wet conditions, excessive irrigation should be avoided.



Virginia Buttonweed Readily Adapts to Mowing



Virginia Buttonweed as a Spreading Perennial



The Flower of Virginia Buttonweed

THE BASICS	
Type	Broadleaf (Dicot)
Description	Spreading warm-season perennial
Leaves	Opposite
Flowers	Between the leaf and the stem (leaf axils). Individual flowers star-shaped with four white petals
Stems	Usually trail along the ground but sometimes are ascending. Stems can root at the nodes and occasionally hairy.
Fruit	Small, hairy capsule (1/4 inch) that contains 2 seeds

References to trade names are made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied by Texas AgriLife Extension Service.