

CROWSFOOT

Eleusine indica



Description & life cycle

Crowsfoot (*Eleusine indica*) is a Summer growing grass that tolerates close mowing and compacted wet or dry soils. Crowsfoot competes aggressively with turf species and germinates in spring after rain when temperatures reach 15°C - 18°C.

Crowsfoot gains its name from the way the leaves angle from the stem, making it look like "crows feet".

Reaching up to 50cm in height, Crowsfoot has a very strong, fibrous root system and is a coloniser of bare or disturbed areas. The stems are upright to sprawling and can form a mat, however they do not make root at the nodes.

The seed head consists of several short, finger-like branches radiating from the top of an erect stalk.

Leaves are shiny, green and hair free. They can be up to 9cm long.

Crowsfoot has been recorded to produce up to 60,000 seeds per plant. These seeds will not germinate until soil temperatures are in the 15-18°C range. In optimum conditions, the time between germination and flowering is approximately 5 weeks.

Key features

- > Is a common weed of lawns and playing fields, where the grass cover is thick or has been disturbed during Winter.
- > When matured, it forms thick clumps that disrupt the surfaces of playing fields.
- > Normally infests turf and over 40 crops throughout tropical areas of the world.

Control

1. Small clumps can be chipped out or removed by hand, although mature plants have a strong, fibrous root system that resist removal.
2. An effective management strategy is to improve turf-growing conditions by alleviating soil compaction and reducing excessive moisture. The current turf registration for pre-emergent controls in Australia includes Pendimethalin, Dithiopyr and Oxidiazon. These herbicides should be applied when soil temperatures at 10cm deep average 15°C for 24 hours. This is usually from early August to September.
3. The clumping nature of this weed significantly impacts on the safety and usability of the sporting surface or park. Post emergent control can be achieved with repeat applications of Diclofop-methyl. Diclofop-methyl is most effective on Crowsfoot in temperatures below 24°C. This means a narrow window of opportunity to treat in early spring and early Autumn.