

Getting an Edge on Lawn Spray Edgers

By

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Introduction - Keeping a neatly manicured lawn is one of the home gardener's main objectives and because summer grasses grow so much, one of the biggest challenges. Certain southern lawn grasses like St. Augustinegrass and bermudagrass vigorously send out creeping runners during peak summer growing months, which quickly frustrate gardeners. Moreover, hard to mow lawn areas next to fences, guard rails, sidewalks, buildings, trees, etc., are a constant maintenance headache. There are a few ways to keep the yard trimmed. Old fashioned muscle power and mechanical gadgets such as weed 'whackers' and vertical edgers, have been the traditional approaches used by lawn enthusiasts. In the past few years, herbicide sprays have gained acceptance as 'liquid lawn edgers.' In this article, I cover some of the spray materials available in the marketplace.

Chemical Lawn Sprays for Edging

Roundup - The first material is an old standard - Roundup™ (glyphosate). Roundup is a nonselective herbicide that is often applied as a spray to control lawn runners and hard to mow areas. Roundup is absorbed by the plant leaves and shoots and translocated to other plant organs providing a total plant kill in a matter of a few days, to several days or more depending on the time of the year. Activity is slowed during our cooler, slower growth periods and enhanced during the summer and early fall.

There are several Roundup products available in the marketplace, including those with dilute (ready to use) products or concentrated solutions which require dilution. There are also Roundup mixtures (e.g., Roundup Pro) with surfactants added, which in our tests provide a quicker burn (response) with less translocation. Tank mixing Roundup with Scythe™, a fatty acid nonselective contact herbicide, acts to provide a more rapid and trim response as well. The general recommended rate of Scythe is a three percent volume to volume solution (4 ozs. of Scythe per gallon of finished spray solution) mixed with the recommended rate of Roundup (see Roundup label for rates for your particular application need).

Reward - From Zeneca, Professional Products, Reward™ is familiar to many as the aquatic and noncrop herbicide - Diquat. Reward is quickly absorbed by turf, and activity (darker tissue) is noticeable within hours and a tannish colored top burn is obvious within 24 hours ([photo 2](#), Reward second strip from right). A 75% nonionic spreader (0.8-1.6 oz/gal of finished solution) should be used in tank mixes with this product (see label for required rates of Reward). As I mentioned above, the action of Reward is quite rapid on St. Augustinegrass and bermudagrass with little spread past the point of application. Reapplication frequency will depend on the time of local conditions and needs.

Finale - The final product discussed in this article is appropriately named Finale™ (Glufosinate-ammonium:ammonium-DL-homoalanin-4-yl-(methyl) phosphinate) by the AgroEvo USA Company. Finale is a nonselective foliar-absorbed herbicide with no soil residual activity. Unlike the above products, the Finale label doesn't specify the need for a surfactant or spreader. Of the materials mentioned, visual effects from Finale applications take a little longer than Roundup Pro, Roundup+Scythe or Reward to achieve complete topkill in my experiences with the material.

Application Methods - These materials are often applied as sprays, but other applicators such as rope and wick applicators have been shown to be effective when used appropriately. For spot spray applications, avoid drift and/or direct application to non-target materials, foliar roots, etc. Use either a medium-flow solid cone spray nozzle or flat fan nozzles for edging. Shielding non-targeted materials with tarps can be quite beneficial. Make sure that thorough coverage (spray to wet or wicked on) is made for best control. Incomplete coverage results in unattractive alternating green and dead grass wavelike patterns ([see photo 4](#)). Avoid spraying during windy conditions and cold weather periods.

In all cases, follow label instructions and contact your local Cooperative Extension Service for specific restrictions and additional products.

Photo 1. Trimline comparison between Round+Scythe and Finale.

Photo 2. Reward trimline (second from right), provides a neat edge, quickly. Roundup+Scythe, (far right) provides quicker trimline, than Roundup alone (second from left).

Photo 3. Incomplete product coverage results in poorly demarcated trimline around a palm tree.

Photo 4. Intermittent wavy appearance due to poor application technique with nonselective herbicide.

Photo 5. Lawn areas next to walls and other hard to other hard to reach sits are prime sites for edgers.

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Incomplete product coverage results in poorly demarcated trimline around a palm tree.



Intermittent wavy appearance due to poor application technique with nonselective herbicide.



Lawn areas next to walls and other hard to reach sits are prime sites for edgers.