

Wally's Weekly News 30th MAY 2009
Written by Wally Richards.

STRAWBERRIES AND HYDROCOTYLE

June is the first month of winter and the month that most of the different types of strawberry plants become available in garden centres.

Strawberries are a woodland plant and the modern strawberries such as Pajaro have been bred from the original wild ones. This is important information to use when you come to plant strawberries in containers or in strawberry beds.

Strawberries therefore do best on a partly sunny situation, with ample woodland debris such as rotting leaves and decaying wood.

As there are ample fallen leaves, available at this time, you can collect these and put them through a shredder or lay them on a bit of lawn (where it does not matter) and run over them with a rotary mower.

Your catcher should be full of nicely shredded leaves. Mix with this about a similar amount of untreated sawdust for the decaying wood.

A good sprinkling of blood and bone incorporated will become your woodland mix. This should be worked into the area where you are going to plant your strawberries saving about half the woodland mix as mulch to place around the strawberries after planting.

If you are going to plant into containers or into troughs, then add your woodland mix to an equal amount of compost/ top soil. (Two thirds compost, one third soil) Incorporate all together well for the potting medium.

Plant up your strawberry plants and then drench them with **Mycorrcin**, **MBL** and water. The **Mycorrcin** has been proven in trials, to increase the yield of strawberries by 200 to 400%.

A 2 weekly spray of the plants with **Mycorrcin** is the on going treatment. (**MBL** can be added to this if you like) For those that like to obtain the most health benefits from their home grown produce, place a quarter teaspoon of **Ocean Solids** and half a teaspoon of **Rok Solid** under each plant in the planting hole.

For gardeners that have existing strawberries now is the time to collect the rooted runners to start off a fresh strawberry patch.

Existing plants that have done well and are free of disease can be left in the beds and drenched with the **Mycorrcin**.

Any plants that have not done well or have disease should be removed from the bed.

Also remove dead leaves off existing plants and tidy up the bed.

In the spring you can apply the woodland mix as a mulch with any of the other products as desired.

The earlier you establish your new strawberries the better the crop you will achieve this coming season.

Late plantings in spring or early summer will never be as good as plantings now.

HYDROCOTYLE

I received the following email from a gardener in Foxton and with his permission received I would like to share it with you.

Hello Wally,

I finally I eradicated the Hydrocotyle weed, in all my lawns. This weed was rampant, but I can finally tell you that I killed the lot.

Now I used a weed killer called "GRAZON" a fellow musician in Otaki gave me some of this Grazon and apparently it is very costly indeed. This chap "Tim" gave me a container of Grazon and the container would have held approximately 30mls. What I found out was this weed is a classic in that it had what I term as "SURVIVAL" Characteristics I adjusted the spray nozzle for a fine misty flow.

What I found out in the end was to respray every two days, spread over 8 days.

In the end the weed gave up. When I first commenced spraying, the leaf was rather large about the size of clover and that after spraying, the leaf went brown and just disappeared but what surprised me was the appearance of new and small and fresh growth of this weed would appear, so one had to spray every 2nd day and finally it disappeared.

Now I understand, that Christchurch suffers from this weed in a big way and the problem was traced to small motor launches and Yachts which had traveled down the Avon and Heathcote rivers where this weed was rampant, and the owners of these boats would wash them down with a hose, on their property only find that the weed got a hold on in their lawns.

I have 3 lawns which were infested and I can honestly say that I have now; eradicated 99% of this weed but have no illusions that I will not from time to time have to spray again.

My lawns were infested by a person who commercially mows lawns. I suffered a stroke in 1998 and so I obtained the services of a lawn mowing person and I am convinced that this person did not wash his mowers before using their mower on my property.

I trust this information will help other people who have this weed in their lawns.

Kind regards, R White, Foxton.

Maybe there are some gardeners that have this weed in their lawns and wish to eradicate the pest.

Grazon would be found in stock and station agents, farm suppliers etc.

It is available in one litre bottles which should be available for the home gardener without having to have a Handlers License.

I personally do not like the use of herbicides but for some situations they are a boon.

Remember that for a few months the lawn clippings are likely to contain the herbicide so do not use them in your compost or as mulch around your gardens except under well established trees and shrubs.

To prevent spray drift you can make a spray shield out a 2 litre plastic ice cream container.

Make a hole in the centre of the container just big enough to fit over the end of your spray wand when the nozzle is removed. Screw back on the nozzle and adjust it to a medium spray mist.

When you place the container over the weed and pull the trigger all the spray particles will remain inside the container area.

Do not use this spray unit for any other types of sprays except for weed killers.

Even if you wash it out thoroughly there may still be parts per million adhered to the plastic tank and that is all it takes to upset your roses, beans and tomatoes.

Problems ring me at 0800 466464 (Palmerston North 3570606)

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