Your weeds are trying to tell you something

BY ADRIAN HIGGINS The Washington Post

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Weeds are more than unsightly in a lawn. They are spotlighting your turf mistakes. By identifying common weeds, you can figure out the conditions that are promoting them. Without fixing the underlying problem, you can expect them to appear again all too soon, negating the hard work spent restoring the lawn this fall.

■ Weed: White clover

Problem: Poor, acidic soil

Fix: Correct fertilizing will help turf bully out the clover, which is deep rooted and difficult to remove. Large stands of clover can be tilled and reseeded, but will eventually return without a program of turf fertilizing and liming based on soil test results.

■ Weed: **Broadleaf plantain**

Problem: Dry, compacted soil.

Fix: Till, rake or aerate soil before reseeding, adding organic matter to the mix.

■ Weed: **Crabgrass**

Problem: Poor, dry soil. Thin turf.

Fix: Apply a pre-emergent crabgrass killer next spring, when the forsythia is in bloom. In large infestations, renovate the turf by aeration and overseeding.

■ Weed: Wiregrass or bermudagrass

Problem: Compacted soil. Thin turf.

Fix: Pull runners, aerate or rake soil, and reseed. Always mow the lawn at the highest possible setting on the mower so the taller turfgrass will shade out low-growing wiregrass.

■ Weed: Common blue violet

Problem: Poorly drained turf

Fix: Aerate the turf and add a one-inch layer of humus and sand, mixed, before overseeding. Consider laying a drain pipe to divert storm water to garden beds or other suitable outlet. Or convert the affected turf into a shrub and flower bed, installing plants that tolerate moist soil.

■ Weed: **Ground ivy**

Problem: Moist, compacted soil in shady conditions Fix: Same as violet







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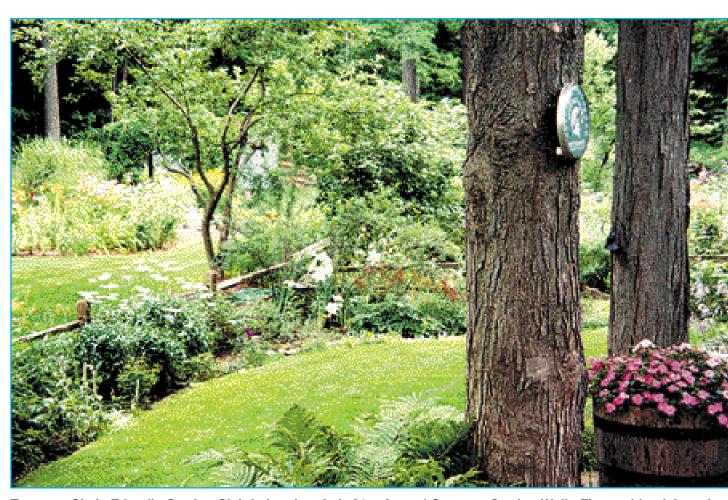
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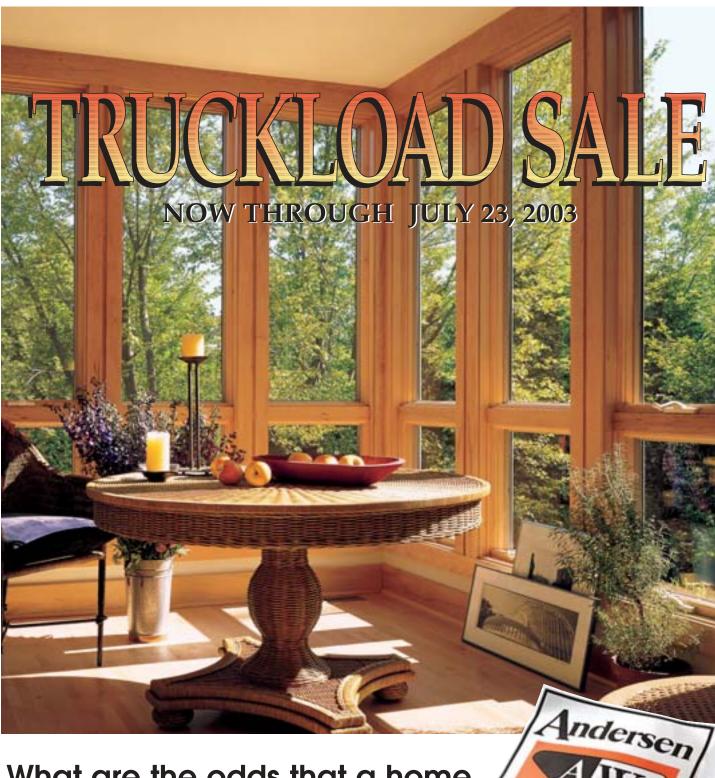
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