

Managing Weeds in a Highly Landscaped Community.

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Weed control in intensively landscaped residential settings provides a set of challenges more complicated than most other commercially maintained landscape settings. The clients, who are typically committee and board members within Homeowners' Associations (HOAs), have a personal connection to the property being maintained and bring a layer of expectation and concerns that commercial and industrial property managers generally do not.

The homeowners in highly landscape HOA properties have often chosen to live in their particular neighborhood because of the beautiful aesthetics that the landscape provides. They have the expectation that the landscape will always be performing at its highest level with few, if any, problems, issues or deficiencies. Weeds are not acceptable! But the added layer of these homeowners' concerns for safety for their children, their pets and themselves can complicate the implementation of weed control. Good listening combined with client education provide a channel for communication that allows us to develop a strategy that works.

While always taking clients' needs and wants into consideration, the landscape manager is additionally tasked with working efficiently and staying within the property's budget. Herbicide use is a great help in this regard, providing efficiencies and cost savings that are not realized with more labor intensive manual operations. But herbicide use brings the need for responsible safety and training practices that reduce damage to the landscape and exposure to employees and residents.

Implementing a successful strategy requires the development of a plan, which takes into account your clients' vision and is well communicated to your employees. Ongoing, hands-on training and proper product selection can provide efficiency and safety. Communication and feedback with vendors allows for an ever-evolving and improving plan that is beneficial for all involved in providing beautiful weed-free landscapes.