

## Controlling Florida Betony, Wild Garlic and Dandelions

Florida betony is not a Florida vacation spot. It is a perennial weed. That means it comes back again every year. The leaves are opposite each other on the stem and are about one inch long with little teeth on them. The stem is square and flowers are white or pink with purple spots. It has a white underground tuber that looks like a rattle snake rattle. This gives it another name - rattlesnake weed. The plant smells when crushed. Florida betony invades lawns and flower beds. Herbicides will kill the top but it will regrow. This means you will have to re-treat for several years. Also, you must treat it all for best control. If you miss some, the weed will continue to spread. Do you get the idea that Florida betony is hard to control?

Spraying Florida betony at bloom gives best control. If it is growing in flower beds, use Round Up or similar chemicals. Use the Weed Be Gone or Round-Up repeatedly every 4 to 5 weeks or so. You may have to do this several years to make an impact. Remember that Round Up (and related chemicals) will damage all green leaves and stems it touches. Keep it off your good plants.

If the Florida betony is growing in the lawn, spray the weed with Weed Be Gone or similar chemicals. Read and follow all label directions. Some of these type weed killers cannot be used on St. Augustine grass or centipede.

Is there any other way to control Florida betony? You can pull it over and over again. This will slow its spread and may slowly kill it. You must not let any escape. Dig up the tubers. This is where it grows from. Do not move soil with Florida betony tubers or roots in it. Mulch heavily all beds, though this is not a big help with this weed.

Wild garlic is another headache weed. The best chemical control is Image. Once again, it will probably take several years for good control. Spray twice several weeks apart and again the following year. Weed B Gone or similar products work fairly well, but not as well as Image. The best control is digging up all the little garlics. Dispose of the plant in the garbage can. If you put it in the yard waste beside the road, it may be composted and sent to someone else's yard to live.

Dandelions can be a beauty to some and an eyesore to others. If you want to be rid of them, spray them repeatedly with Weed Be Gone or similar chemicals as recommended for Florida betony. Weed Be Gone and other chemicals contain 2,4 - D and Banvel which control many broadleaf weeds.

Some lawn problems are incurable. All we do is manage. Remember that a healthy lawn is often the best weed control. Contact your Extension Service for details on better managing your lawn and weeds.