An Ecological Perspective on Common Lawn ‘Weeds’

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**What are ‘Weeds’?**
- Ecologically defined: naturally dispersed plants that grow where their needs are met, i.e. self-recruiting sp.
- Culturally defined: undesirable plants that grow where they are not wanted
- Maintaining a completely weed-free lawn is resource intensive, i.e. irrigation, fertilization, and pesticide use
- GOAL: Introduce homeowners and green industry professionals to some potential beneficial self-recruiting lawn plants
- Do not detract from the function of a lawn

**What and Why of Lawns**
- Frequently moved area of turfgrass or low-growing mixed species that provide soil stabilization
- Maintained for aesthetics and recreation
- Potential ecological benefits of accepting some self-recruiting species to be present in lawns: color, pollinator & wildlife resources, and biodiversity

**What We Chose These Native Species**
- Potential ecological benefits
- Tolerate mowing and/or low-growing
- Prevalence in community

**Common Native Species with Potential Ecological Benefits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Potential Ecological Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twinberry</td>
<td>Attracts generalist pollinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pony’s foot</td>
<td>Larval host for Pink-spotted Hawkmoth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dollarweeds</td>
<td>Larval host for Hawkmoth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue-eyed grass</td>
<td>Source of nectar and pollen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiderworts</td>
<td>Source of nectar and pollen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yellow wood sorrel</td>
<td>Nectar and pollen resources for generalists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basketgrass</td>
<td>Larval host for Carolina satyr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida betony</td>
<td>Source of nectar and pollen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Common Non-Native Species**

- **Beneficial (potentially)**
  - Threeflower tick-trefoil: Desmodium triflorum
  - Potential nitrogen fixing symbiosis
  - Potential for floral resources

- **Invasive (potentially)**
  - West Indian chickweed: D. carolinianus
  - Seeds attach to clothing

**Next Steps**

- Increase understanding of potential benefits of native lawn plants
- Educate and provide resources on identifying common species in the lawn
- Currently writing EDIS publication
- Develop management strategies for multispecies lawns

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