

Field Notes
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At right is a photograph of Creeping Rivergrass with spots on the leaves. The disease causing them is blast, the same disease found in rice. In this instance it actually behaves as a mild herbicide slowing down the growth of the plants. I have seen the disease on many grasses over the years and this one has been confirmed by Dr. Groth who was able to isolate blast spores from the lesions a couple of years ago.

Below are two photographs taken in Vermilion parish. Dr. Groth had earlier examined leaves collected from the same field and suspects the disease is brown spot. Interestingly, the spots were mainly on the lower leaves indicating the environmental conditions favorable for the development of this weak pathogen were no longer present.





These three photographs show herbicide injury related to application problems. The variety is CL161 which has excellent herbicide tolerance. The field had been sprayed with a mixture of Newpath, Permit, and Grasp plus a crop oil. From an undetermined cause the herbicide application was uneven with some areas getting too much herbicide resulting in the pattern shown in the top photo. The bottom left picture is of plants in the affected area. The bottom right photograph compares the root systems of affected plants on the left and “normal” plants on the right. Clearly there is reduction in root mass. This is NOT root pruning. The affected roots are not short and stubby, there are just less of them and those present are not as long as the unaffected. True root pruning results in damage to the root tips where growth occurs. The consequence is a short, stubby root or a root obviously missing the root tip. The first type of pruning can happen when herbicides containing pendimethalin (Prowl, Stealth) contact the root. The second type of pruning usually is the result of insect feeding as in the case of rice water weevils or disease such as root rots or hydrogen sulfide toxicity. Twenty or thirty years ago most herbicides had a 2X measure of safety built into them, but today’s herbicides do not. It was already a pretty hot mixture and overlapping the pattern caused injury.



If a grass seedling is only an inch tall and it is beginning to tiller, as is this seedling, it is a safe bet you are looking at sprangletop. Sprangletop can exhibit several growth habits depending on environmental conditions. In a dry field seedlings often take on the form shown at left producing three to four leaves and tillers by the time they are an inch tall. In water seeded or other flooded situations I have seen tall slender plants with only a couple of leaves and no tillers. Knowing the history of the field will lend a hand, but knowing the habits of the plant as well as its biological characteristics is the only way to be sure of its identity.

Below are a couple of photos for your enjoyment. The eagle was in Concordia parish, not far from our verification field. The whooping crane was in Vermilion parish. This one kept picking up what appeared to be the same crawfish, shaking it, and then dropping it back into the water. It obviously knew it had something to eat, but did not know quite how to get at it.

