



Corn Gluten

Corn Gluten is a **natural pre-emergent herbicide** to help control *annual* lawn and garden weeds. (Annual weeds do not have persistent roots. They grow from a seed, complete their life cycle, and die within one year). Those who use corn gluten properly as part of an organic maintenance program find their lawn and landscape healthier and more weed-free year after year. Under the right conditions, each application of corn gluten prevents a majority of the weed seeds from sprouting. Compared to the long-term harmful effects of synthetic herbicides and chemical “weed and feed” products, the cost benefits of using corn gluten are significant and long-lasting. The **dry corn gluten is also a fertilizer containing 9% nitrogen**, adding fertility and life to the soil. The liquid form is very convenient, employing a hose end attachment on the bottle for easy application, but does not provide the fertilizing component.

Timing is the most important factor in the effectiveness of corn gluten, as with any pre-emergent herbicide. The corn gluten must be present on the soil **before the weed seeds sprout** (germinate) in order to be effective. There are two different times of year when we can control *most* weeds in our area: late winter and late summer/early fall. Since weed seeds can germinate anytime of the year, in some serious weed situations it would be beneficial to reapply corn gluten every 6 weeks during the growing season (and is particularly beneficial in the vegetable garden when using transplants, but cannot be used if direct seeding into the garden).

- **Mid-January** – This application of corn gluten helps control spring and summer weeds, such as crabgrass and sandbur. As the soil begins to warm in late winter is the correct time to apply corn gluten. Especially with sandburs, multiple applications may be necessary. Corn gluten may be applied every 6 weeks through September.
- **Mid-September** – This application helps control fall and winter weeds, such as annual bluegrass, rescuegrass, henbit, chickweed, bur clover, mustards, and annual thistles. This is the proper time to fertilize lawns, so corn gluten will suffice as the fall fertilizer, too. The best time to apply is when we feel the first break in the hot weather of summer – at the *first hint* of cooler weather.

The recommended application rate is 20 pounds per 1000 square feet or 2 pounds per 100 square feet. Do not apply compost, compost tea, or soil activator for 6 – 8 weeks after applying corn gluten, as it may interfere with the effectiveness of the corn gluten. In garden beds, hand pull existing weeds, and then apply corn gluten. Reapply whenever the soil is turned. On a lawn, a drop spreader is ideal for spreading corn gluten. After application, **water the area and then allow it to dry for several days**. Corn gluten is most effective under these conditions, so avoid applying prior to a rainy period. **Do not distribute seeds into the area. Corn gluten will prevent their germination for the next 6-8 weeks!**