CORN GLUTEN MEAL
A Natural Alternative for Weed Control

DESCRIPTION
One of the most important breakthroughs in organic lawn care has its roots in a fortunate accident by Iowa State University researcher Nick Christians. The natural herbicide that resulted from his research (made from corn gluten meal) is now patented, and is licensed for use in turf and home gardens as an alternative to weed and feed products. Corn gluten meal is a powdery by-product of the corn milling process. Used for years as a supplement in hog feed, this natural protein is very effective for lawns and gardens as a plant food as well as a weed suppressor. Corn gluten meal products offer a non-toxic, yet effective alternative to traditional, chemical-based weed and feed products for weed control in gardens and lawns, paths and driveways. As a plant food, corn gluten has a N-P-K ratio of 9-1-0, or 10% nitrogen by weight. As a weed suppressant, corn gluten acts as a natural "pre-emergent" - it inhibits seed germination by drying out a seed as soon as it cracks open to sprout. These qualities make corn gluten an ideal 'weed n feed' product. Corn gluten meal for lawn and garden use comes in three forms:

- **unprocessed** - very fine, almost powdery in texture. Can be broadcast by hand, but for best results use a hand seeder. It will look like a layer of pollen on the soil. Must be applied directly on bare earth or around new plantings because it can't work its way down through grass or mulch.
- **granulated** - easiest to apply using a spreader. Can also be mixed with water into a paste to use as a patch for localized weed suppression. The patch will keep weeds from sprouting while the surrounding plants fill in.
- **pelletized** - can be broadcast by hand. This is an excellent treatment for lawns in spring and fall; a general application will add nutrients to your lawn while discouraging the growth of new weeds.

Among the weeds controlled with pre-emergent application of the product are crabgrass, dandelions, smart weed, redroot pigweed, purslane, lambsquarters, foxtail, and barnyard grass. The three forms of corn gluten meal described above are comparable in effectiveness.

TIPS FOR USING CORN GLUTEN MEAL

- Coverage depends on which form of corn gluten you're using, so read the package for accurate application. In general, however, corn gluten is applied at 20 - 40 lbs per 1000sq ft.
- Corn gluten will not work until wetted, so wet it down using a fine soft spray after applying.
- One application effectively suppresses weeds for 4 - 6 weeks. Heavy soils, protracted rainy weather and hot spells may require monthly application.
- Effects are cumulative. Results improve with repeated use over time.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

http://www.gluten.iastate.edu/