

Weed Control

First let's learn some basic vocabulary about weeds to help you choose the right course of action to take in weed control/prevention.....

- **Pre-emergent** – these products can be applied once an area is weed free and will keep anything from growing through the soil for a specified period of time. Be careful when using with seeds, including lawn areas.
- **Post-emergent** – these products can be sprayed directly on weeds and will kill them roots and all if the right one is chosen and used in a proper manner.
- **Selective** – these products can kill some types of weeds, but not other plants. Think about your lawn – you use a selective lawn weed killer to kill broadleaved weeds without killing your turf.
- **Non-selective** – these products kill all plants period end of story when used properly.
- **Organic/Natural** – these products contain no synthetic chemical, and use natural ingredients to work. You may have to reapply on tough weeds, and product may not get a few of the tougher ones either. Can be any of the types above.
- **Synthetic/Chemical** – these products contain synthetic chemicals and work well when used properly. These can be any of the types listed above as well.

Areas in the home landscape and which herbicides to focus on using.....

In lawn areas – utilize selective products that kill broadleaved weeds without harming turf.

- Organic/Natural options – Weed Beater FE (selective post-emergent). Corn Gluten (non-selective pre-emergent)
- Synthetic/Chemical options – Weed Beater Ultra or Sedge Ender (selective post-emergent). Weed Beater Complete (selective pre and post-emergent)

In landscape beds – utilize these products carefully to spot spray around landscape amongst shrubs, perennials, trees and other plants. DO NOT get the spray onto plants you want to save.

- Organic/Natural options – Botanical Kleenup (non-selective post-emergent), or BurnOut (non-selective post-emergent), or Corn Gluten (non-selective pre-emergent)
- Synthetic/Chemical options – BK32 (selective post-emergent) will not kill weedy grasses, we are looking at other options besides glyphosate (Kleenup or RoundUp)

In Vegetable/Edible Gardens – utilize organic/natural products only around edibles and be careful with pre-emergent types if you sow seeds.

- Organic/Natural options – Botanical Kleenup (non-selective post-emergent), Corn Gluten (non-selective pre-emergent AFTER seeds have sprouted)

In gravel/driveway/sidewalks/non-vegetative areas – utilize any weed killers as you will not have to worry about getting it onto plants you desire to keep.

- Organic/Natural options – BurnOut (non-selective post-emergent)
- Synthetic/Chemical options – BK32 (selective post-emergent) – will not kill weedy grasses

In perimeter areas – utilize a heavier duty brush killer to manage hard to kill woody plants and invasive plants such as blackberry, ivy, or horsetail. Some may need multiple applications.

- Organic/Natural Option – not much but physical removal or check internet for local advice on things like Vinegar and other home remedies.
- Chemical Option – use BK32 (selective post-emergent) or Stump-Out (non-selective post-emergent)

Some general advice on weed control.....

Use products as directed – Always use both synthetic/chemical and organic/natural products as directed, READ THE LABELS!

Mark your sprayer – It is always a good idea to have a designated sprayer marked “Herbicide” and use it only for this. Never take a chance of residue damaging plants when you go to spray fertilizer or other products. Washing it out may not get all herbicide out.

Use “Turbo” – Utilize this spreader/sticker to supercharge all your herbicide applications. This will essentially “glue” herbicide to your weeds, maximizing effectiveness and allowing you to use less product and save money.

Timing is everything – Watch temperatures as many products need minimum temperatures to work. Watch rain as all herbicides need a few hours of dry to soak in.

Get a head start in spring – get weeds controlled early before they have a chance to go to seed, when one becomes a hundred!

Maximize your foliage to absorb spray – don’t cut back woody plants then spray – more foliage means more absorption. Spray in spring as products will be translocated to roots quickly for maximum effectiveness – especially on things like Blackberry and woody invasive plants.

Consider Brushing vs. Spraying – In landscape beds around shrubs, be careful not to get spray on wanted plants. Spray volatilizes easily - you think you are being careful but herbicide damage will occur. Brushing on heavier duty products (like brush killers) on plants like Blackberry and others is safer when feasible, and will cut down use of heavier duty synthetic chemicals.

Reapply as needed – Some weeds are especially hard to kill (think Horsetail), and products may need to be re-applied to get these tougher weeds roots and all. Always go back and check treated areas in a week or so, and evaluate if you need to reapply.

Useful tools – If you go manual labor style select a useful tool like a Hula-Ho – either short or long handle. Use the right tool for the right job!

Mulch – A good layer of organic mulch or bark will help suppress weeds – and conserve water – and add nutrients to your soil long term. Mulching 3-4” is an excellent way to help you soil and control weeds. Ones that do grow are very easy to pull out of mulched areas.

Newspaper, Cardboard, even Burlap – Can be used as soil cover to help suppress weeds and kill existing ones before planting an area. Never use plastic – it will “kill” your soil.