



Weed Control

Weeds are a part of life if you are a gardener or have a lawn.

Plants are most vulnerable to weeds when they are just starting to grow and are weakest. One option is to germinate seeds in containers and transplant them into the ground once they have reached two inches or more – this will at least give the plants a head start.

How you treat and manage weeds is important, as many quick-acting herbicides contain very potent and harmful chemicals. The chemicals which are especially harmful to people, animals and the environment are those that contain glyphosate (such as Roundup) or those that contain 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid.

The good news is that there are effective ways to get rid of weeds without affecting humans, animals or the environment.

Alternatives that work on managing and even eliminating weeds and are safe for everyone include:

Hand Weeding

Regularly pulling up any weeds that appear is the easiest and safest way to control weeds in a home garden. The key to success with hand weeding is to do it regularly to avoid it getting out of hand and overwhelming. The best time to kill weeds is when you can barely see them - so daily monitoring pays off.

Boiling water:

Spot pouring boiling water right onto the root of a weed will also kill it. This method is ideal for weeds growing on flooring like sidewalks and driveways.

Lemon Juice

Fill a spray bottle with lemon juice and spray weeds (careful not to get any on your skin as lemon juice can burn and stain your skin if exposed to sun). This will require a couple of days of repeating. To make it stronger add vinegar.

Mulch

Mulch is one of the most effective ways of preventing weeds. Not all mulch is safe - avoid treated wood mulch and be careful with some store-bought mulches which could have gone bad and (smell vinegary and pungent).

The right organic mulches can not only help control weeds but improve the soil's structure, drainage, and nutrient-holding capacity as they decompose. Some examples are newspaper, fallen leaves and grass clippings. Pea Straw works well with new growth

vegetable gardens- you will put about 2 cm of mulch around the new growth and then wet to keep in place. Straw, pine needles, seaweed can work for larger plants.

Thanks to Jean Prescott, who has provided us with the following recipe that is effective for getting rid of weeds that pop up between cracks in the pavement, pave stones etc.

Recipe

one litre vinegar

1/4 cup salt

2 tsp soap (dish soap works well)

Squirt from an old shampoo bottle into the cracks.

Jean notes you might need to double the recipe for a driveway. She recommends clearing the cracks with a sharp tool or old paring knife in the spring. Then apply this solution on clear day. Repeat about every 6 weeks or when necessary. Highly effective

Roof Moss Removal

2 LBS. Zinc Sulphate

5 Gallons of Hot Water

Let sit for 30 minutes or so. Use a long-handled brush and scrub off the moss. Use this in the spring for shed roofs etc.

Sources: Nontoxic munchkin; One Green Planet

Note: *Our Environmental Action Team would like to express our thanks to Judith Gordon for all that she has done to create awareness and knowledge about environmental issues. I have big footsteps to fill in taking over the Green Tips column as Judith heads out for adventures abroad. We wish her all the best.*

Please feel free to email me any articles, ideas etc. that you would like to see in the coming months.

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