

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 properly.
- **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 re-apply on tough weeds and product may not get a few of the tougher ones either. Can be any of the types above.
- **Synthetic/Chemical/Systemic** – 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 – Captain Jack's Lawnweed Brew (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 the plants you want to save.

- Organic/Natural options – Captain Jack's Deadweeed Brew (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). Also Have Stump/Vine Killer as well.

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 – Captain Jack’s Deadweed Brew (non-selective post-emergent), Corn Gluten (non-selective pre-emergent AFTER seeds have sprouted)

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

- Organic/Natural options – Captain Jack’s Deadweed Brew (non-selective post-emergent)
- Synthetic/Chemical options – BK32 (selective post-emergent), will not kill weedy grasses
- Consider using a torch, boiling water, vinegar, and other options as well, but be careful!

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 (acetic acid) 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 conditions to soak in and do their damage.
- **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** – DO NOT cut back woody plants and then spray, more foliage means more absorption. Spray in the 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, whether the product is chemical or natural. Spray violatizes 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.
- **Spot spraying vs Broad Applications** – Anywhere and especially in turf areas, it is always better, to me, to spot spray for weeds, and not blanket the entire area. This is why “weed and feeds” should be avoided in my opinion. Save yourself some money, and help the environment, and just treat the little areas you need versus doing it everywhere.
- **Reapply as needed** – Some weeds are especially hard to kill (like 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 re-apply.
- **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, conserve water and add nutrients to your soil long term. Mulching 3” to 4” is an excellent way to help your 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 as it will “kill” the microbes in your soil. Some call this “sheet mulching” and it may be something to consider when rejuvenating a new spot in the garden.
- **Consider using a weed fabric** – Be sure to consider what quality you need, some are cheap and don’t last long while others will last a long time. Never use plastic, weed fabric still allows soil to breathe and water to penetrate and then evaporate. Be sure to pin it down well, and mulch over the top. Holes can be cut for existing plants or new ones as well if needed. Weeds may still grow in mulch but are now easy to pull.