

HOME & GARDEN

Come to grips with your weed woes

By EILEEN M. HASSE
Christian Science Monitor

Weeds are universal. To keep a garden, or even a lawn, means coming to grips with scores of plants growing out of place. Some of these are more determined than others. Some are short-lived. Fight them for a season and they are easily killed. They are the annuals.

Biennials live two years, producing their seed in the second year. They are a bit more determined to live than the annuals, since they constantly have a generation of young plants to bear seed. One must get the parent plant as well as the young plants.

Perennials, the worst type of weed, live forever. They spread seed and grow from root cuttings. To end a perennial one must get all the root as well as the seedlings.

Each geographical area has its own "rogues' gallery" of weeds. You can identify the ones that plague your garden and lawn most, study the methods of eradication for those particular weeds, and set about the process with determination.

Some garden centers and dealers of herbicides have colored weed charts to help you identify your problem. If you don't find this help in your area, you may use the free weed identification that is a special service of specialists in Ohio. Wrap your weed specimen in aluminum foil. Do not add moisture. Mail it to Scott's Weed-Ident, Marysville, Ohio 43040. You will receive identification and the best methods of control.

To grow a successful lawn or garden it is important to eradicate the weeds, since they use the same soil nutrients needed by the good plants. A good lawn fertilizer will thicken the turf and discourage weeds. Similarly, a good stand of vegetable or flower plants will shade the soil and discourage weeds from taking over.

The fight is constant, however. Once-in-a-while care is never as effective as the watchful eye that gets the weeds while they are young; in other words, before they have crowded out the good plants.

Hoeing your garden weekly, especially after it rains, will help to keep the weeds under control. Run the hoe about an inch beneath the surface of the soil. Hand-pull any weeds close to the vegetable or flower plants. Hand-pulling is the most effective in protecting both perennial flowers and shrubs. This gets the roots if you pull them when the soil is wet.

Mulching is effective in controlling weeds among green plants. But weed seeds can be brought in with straw, hay, lawn clippings, or even from the compost pile. Sawdust and

black plastic mulch is free of weed seeds, but the sawdust is very acid. This should be considered when you use it.

Black plastic keeps weeds from growing, but it also keeps the moisture from reaching the roots of the plants unless it is perforated somewhat. The perforations, in turn, may allow enough light to seep in to encourage some weed growth.

Chemicals for controlling weeds are available on the market. Each type of weed has its chemical enemy. To select the weed killers you can use, study the package. The package knows best about chemical weed control. Buy yours from reputable places that carry known brands. Then follow the directions to the letter.

Chemicals can be used very effectively to eradicate weeds in the lawn, among well-established shrubs, trees, and perennials.

The use of chemicals in the vegetable garden is tricky, since your garden has many kinds of plants, and some of these may be affected by the chemicals. Also, there is no way to confine the chemical to a single row of vegetables. The runoff from a rain is sure to carry the chemical into other rows, where the effect may be disastrous.

All chemicals are potentially dangerous. Pay special attention to the directions concerning children and pets. Many dollars and endless hours of research by responsible nurseries and seed houses have resulted in the directions on the box of weed control. These assure you of safety and satisfaction if the product is used properly.

Fertilizing your garden soil with a good commercial fertilizer, used according to directions, will assure you of maximum vegetable growth. This discourages weed growth as the vegetables cover the soil.

Other materials that make good mulch are wood shavings, strips of worn linoleum, pine needles, and bark.

Late summer and early fall is a good time to fight weeds. If they are treated chemically in the lawn or hand-pulled in the garden, any remaining roots will go into winter in a weakened condition, if not entirely dead. Nature will probably finish the task for you.

Three rogues in my weed gallery are common chickweed, mallow and purslane. These three can be readily controlled in lawns by using a good combination fertilizer and weed control. In the garden, they call for constant care.

Common chickweed grows in any climate or soil. The spreading branches root at every node, allowing it to creep over the lawn or garden in dense patches. The leaves are bright, shiny green, and rounded, and they taper to a point. They grow opposite each other on hairy stems. The flowers,

extremely small, are white, with five deeply notched petals, and are quite showy.

Mallow is sometimes classified as either an annual or a biennial. It grows from a deep, tough taproot and sends out trailing branches of round, sharply serrated leaves on long stems. The flowers are five-petaled, in light pink, rising from the junction of the leaf and the stem. Mallow seeds resemble tiny wheels of cheese.

Purslane can become one of the most troublesome annual weeds in the lawn or garden. It has the ability to store moisture for long periods of time. If you pull or hoe it, you must remove the plant from the lawn or garden or it will take root again.

This weed thrives in hot, dry weather, and usually appears in midsummer. The sprawling fleshy, reddish-brown stems bear bright, shiny green, wedge-shaped leaves. Tiny yellow, five-petaled flowers seldom open unless the sun is shining. Cup-shaped seedpods of purslane produce many small black seeds that may lie dormant in the soil for years.

Whatever weeds have found their way onto your "rogues' gallery," it will demand your constant care so as to allow the good plants to win the battle of survival. In gardening, as in all things, the fittest survive.

GARDEN CALENDAR

The following information is provided by the Franklin County Extension Service.

Now's the time to:

- prevent cucumber wilt by controlling the striped cucumber beetle. Beetles spread the bacterial wilt organism through feeding.
 - plant beets, carrots, beans, chinese cabbage, kale, rutabaga, turnips and late cabbage.
 - plant pansy seeds for blooms next spring.
- protect your plants from Japanese beetles.

Notes

- Lower leaves on tomatoes which have been staked may curl due to stress. No control is warranted.
- Renovating a strawberry bed should be done within two weeks after the last berries are picked.
- Colorado potato beetle adults can be controlled by hand-picking while larvae can be controlled using an appropriate insecticide.
- The New England Lily Show is being held today from noon to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Worcester County Horticulture Hall, 30 Elm St., Worcester. Lilies, other flowers and vegetables will be on display. Admission is free.

Entry gardens can express your personality

By PAT LEUCHTMAN
Recorder Columnist


BETWEEN THE ROWS

child taken in by the village years ago and then tended by that child. I was very moved as the young man giving us the tour proudly showed us

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