

AGC talk, Nov.2019

**Horticultural Hint** ...we have a big topic to cover(summarize):

## **Weeding w/o Glyphosate leads to Weeding w/o Worry.**

Glyphosate damages soil bacteria, and we can't stop there and not discuss the debated health ramifications — BUT It's a hot, big topic and on the Internet....So we won't go there now.

*Every garden or yard or plot has weeds, so...*

### **What is a WEED?**

Many say = **Any plant in wrong place...** or more specifically

= **a plant that causes economic or esthetic loss.**

Ecologists suggest, **WEEDS are NATURE'S way of seeking more diversity.**

## **Managing Weeds:**

— *Expand your “weed-management toolbox” with alternative tactics that I've tried in one way or in combinations:*

- **Design**

In many situations, the design and layout of your planting beds can determine how many weeds you'll have. *Diverse gardens* that contain a multitude of plant species are less likely to face weed woes....Therefore:

Be as diverse as you can in your plantings, and choose easy-to-maintain, native species whenever possible.

- **Irrigation**

When irrigating the garden with broad sweeping sprinklers, water is lost to runoff and evaporation, and more often than not, paths and margins are irrigated right along with the desired plants, causing weed seeds to germinate and weed seedlings to thrive. Installing a ground-level or below-ground drip-irrigation system targets water precisely to plant's roots, eliminating waste and discouraging weeds.

- **Mulching**

Any kind of heavy mulch piled thick above a weed such as a poison ivy plant will kill it. This is a nice solution to use in combination with mowing or trimming.

- **Soil Remediation**

The real focus for just about any weed issue — Why is the WEED there in the first place? What is “wrong” with the soil?

For example: Poison ivy appears to like soils that are deficient in calcium, phosphorus and selenium. Experts say a good compost tea that includes comfrey, horsetail and even seaweed can bring the soil nutrient level up in the soil and create an environment where poison ivy can't survive.

Or take another route, try **Neutralizing Soil pH**

In many cases, weeds similar to poison ivy like an acid soil. Test the soil in the weedy area to be sure, and then add lime to counteract the acidity, e.g.,...Egg shells!

- **Hand Pulling**

Investing in a good hand weeder (a favorite is a Japanese tool called a **hori-hori**) is reported to be a mighty helpful if you do a lot of hand weeding. Although time-consuming, hand pulling is the perfect choice for smaller gardens.

Be sure to weed after rain or irrigation to ensure soft soil and aid in the removal of an entire weed. Leaving root pieces behind often causes weed's to return.

- **Boiling Water**

Try pouring boiling water on the plants and the nearby roots to kill off growth. You must be willing to kill everything in the area, though, as this is a pretty non-specific solution. Boiling water has worked on weeds in my brick walkway but this isn't practical, if an area is large.

- **Mow it**

Repeatedly trimming, weed whacking or mowing off the weeds/vines at the soil surface will end a weed problem such as poison ivy — but you have to be diligent about keeping it trimmed every time the plant pokes its head above ground.

- **Tilling and cultivation**

Turning young weed seedlings into the soil, either by hand cultivation with a hoe or by mechanical tilling, reduces the number of weeds that reach maturity. It's one of the oldest means of weed control—after hand-pulling, of course.

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- **Alternative Herbicides**

**Organic, reduced risk herbicides exist** on today's market that are effective against common weeds—annual species, in particular. For example, alternative herbicides like “*Weed Pharm* (acetic acid) and *GreenMatch* (d-limonene found in citrus peels) have been relatively effective under a wide range of conditions although I have not tried these. (Are they safe?)

Those who choose a chemical route may be chasing a symptom rather than solving the problem.

(Many report that using extreme chemicals like **glyphosate** on a particular weed slows it down but doesn't kill it off completely.)

Ask a big question before diving in with herbicides such as....

If area is already imbalanced enough to allow WEEDs take over in the first place — How may I improve the balance of nature?

Although extreme chemicals are better if they remain at the bottom of one's list of weed-management tools, herbicides are a readily available weapon against weeds. Turning to chemical herbicides is a personal decision for gardeners and one not to be taken lightly. If one chooses to use them: do some research, follow all label instructions, including safety measures and application rates.

**Overall**, many agree that weeds are best controlled by employing a number of techniques in combination. Find what works for you and your garden by evaluating and choosing your weeding techniques wisely,...and then hopefully you will do your weeding without worry. Enjoy your garden!

Reference links, annotated:

1. <https://www.hobbyfarms.com/11-ways-to-manage-weeds-with-success-2/>. *Discusses practical methods for managing weeds. c.2011.*
2. <https://www.everydaycheapskate.com/outdoors-and-garden/hands-down-the-best-way-to-kill-weeds-and-its-not-roundup/>. *Information about Roundup/glyphosate and two alternative weed killer recipes. c. 2015-19.*
3. <https://www.hillandponton.com/weeds-not-worth-killing-with-roundup/>. *Practical description of glyphosate, weeds, and health challenges, for example, charts Glyphosate/Gluten Allergies/Celiac Disease c.2018*
4. <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/are-there-alternatives-to-glyphosate-for-weed-control-in-landscapes>. *Per weed type, describes alternative methods for removing weeds w/o glyphosate. Suggests other herbicides that may, or may not, be safe. Provides chart/list of glyphosate and many other, chemical herbicides. c.2018*

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