



## WEED YOUR WOES AWAY

**A weed is simply a plant growing in the wrong place. But how to get rid of that unwanted plant?**

***Smother* your weeds.** By blocking the sunlight, the plant can not grow. Place thick layers of newspaper over the weeds, you can also use cardboard, landscape fabric, or black plastic. If your planting a new garden use 6-12 layers of newspaper and cut out small holes for planting.

***Mulching*** with at least a 3" layer will block the sun and give you a weed free area. Use wood chips, straw, shredded leaves, pine needles or clean compost.

***Mow* your weeds away.** By keeping the weeds cut they will eventually die because there won't be the leaf growth necessary to produce food for the plant. Cutting your weeds is better than pulling them. When you pull the weeds you may not get the whole root system and any pieces left in the soil will only produce more weeds. If you dig out the weeds you are disturbing the soil and exposing weed seeds to the sunlight where they will eventually germinate and grow.

***Cook* your weeds** by laying down clear plastic and anchoring it on all sides with bricks or stones. The sun will heat the soil under the plastic and bake the weeds and weed seeds. This process may take 4-6 weeks. When you remove the plastic do not till the soil, as this will only bring new weed seeds to the surface. Lightly rake the area and plant. If you must till the soil, water after tilling, allow the newly exposed seeds to germinate and cover again with plastic.

***Spray* your weeds away** with salt, vinegar and soap. Be careful when spraying so as not to harm any nearby plants.

***Salt*** – mix 500 g of table salt with 4 litres of boiling water. The hot brine will kill just about anything it touches, so be careful.

***Vinegar*** – mix 1 part vinegar with 1 part water and spray on undesirable plants. For really tough weeds use vinegar full strength.

***Bleach*** – mix 1 part bleach to 1 part water. Mist the undesirable plants.

***Soap*** – mix 6 Tablespoons of dishwashing liquid with 1 litre of water. Spray undesirable plants during the heat of the day to allow the soap to burn them.

Although undesirable, weeds can be beneficial. They are good indicators as to the condition of your soil.



**Poor soil will support the growth of long rooted weeds such as ragweed, mullein, dandelion and Queen Anne's lace. If you have a lot of dandelions your soil is probably lacking calcium.**

**Chickory grows in soil with a high lime content.**

**Daisies, dock, horsetail, knotweed, wild strawberries and mullein grows in acidic soil.**

**Mustard, thistle, chamomile and wild carrot grows in alkaline soil.**

**Morning glory, horse nettle, chamomile, field mustard and pineapple weed grows in hardpan soil.**

**Heavy clay soil is indicated by the growth of buttercup, chickory, dandelion and broad-leaved dock.**

**Light sandy soil is favoured by goldenrod, bindweed and sheep sorrel.**

**Clover, vetch and black medic grows where the soil is low in nitrogen.**

**Poorly drained soil supports the growth of Joe-Pye weed, sedges, buttercup and horsetail.**

**Humus-rich soil favours lamb's quarter, chickweed and henbit.**