

## Summer Time and Those Dreaded Garden Weeds!

By Sheri Bethard, Texas Certified Master Gardener

By now many of you have stopped working in your gardens due to the piercing summer heat and humidity. So, as you have let your garden go, the weeds have POPPED up all over. Well, to keep you from having to do the "back-breaking" task of weeding, I have found a number of easy ways to rid your garden of those pesky weeds. All are organic and will be safe for you and your family and do not contain any harsh chemicals. So, here goes:

1. **Newspaper/Cardboard** - Lay down a carpet of newspaper (10 sheets thick) or cardboard on top of the weeds around your plants. This will block the sunlight and keeps oxygen from reaching the soil, thus smothering the weeds. Once you lay this down, lightly wet to keep it in place, then cover with mulch or compost and as it decomposes, you can add more to those areas. The decomposed material is adding beneficial nutrients back into the soil.
2. **Corn Gluten Meal** - This corn b-product stops weed seeds from germinating, thus making new weeds. Spread it on the ground around your plants and after your seedlings have taken hold in the soil. After harvest, spread more to prevent late season weeds.
3. **Vinegar** - There are two types of vinegar, the store bought which is about 5% vinegar and one your cane get at your garden or farm store which is about 20 - 21% vinegar. Vinegar will suck the life out of the plant's leaves. It is more destructive to young, tender weed leaves. Those weeds with waxy leaves, the vinegar will just roll off the leaf top, so you will have to be sure to spray the underside. Cover any of your garden plants before spraying to keep the overspray from hitting them.
4. **Alcohol or Vodka** - You may think your weeds are dying drunk when using this concoction, but mix 1 ounce with 2 cups of water and a couple of drops of dish soap and this will dry out the weeds that live in the sun.
5. **Soap** - The oil in soap can break down the waxy or hairy weed surfaces, making them vulnerable to vinegar and alcohol. Also, the soap makes the leaves shiny, which will tell you which ones you have sprayed. And it helps the mixture stay in place on the leaves causing the destruction of the weed.
6. **Boiling Water** - This is good for cracks in driveways and sidewalks and I would not suggest for your garden as you could damage your good plants. Take a kettle of boiling water and pour on the weeds, which will burn up. By the time the water drains to the edge it has cooled enough to not hurt your other plants.

Hope these non-chemical weed treatments help rid you of those pesky garden weeds. Remember for any horticulture or gardening questions, please contact our Master Gardener Hotline at 409 882-7010 Tuesday and Thursdays from 10AM - 2PM. The public is welcome to attend any of our monthly meetings held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 6:30PM at the Orange County EXPO Center. Contact the number above for more information or visit our website <https://txmg.org/orange>