

ORGANIC WEED CONTROL...

Having issues with pesky weeds? Besides the fact that we have limited growing seasons we have to deal with weeds that seem to pop up no matter how hot or cold it is outside. With this we get so tempted to stop by our local store and pick-up the cheapest weed controller we can find, however; although this may seem like the easiest fix it will wreak havoc on your garden/yard for months to come. The chemicals in weed control seep into your soil and make it inhospitable, besides being dangerous to children and pets.

The first step in weed control is prevention. When working in your garden I recommend using a thick layer of organic mulch around your plants. The mulch will actually create a light barrier that will prevent any weeds from producing an adequate amount of chlorophyll needed to grow. Any weeds that do decide to take root and grow up through the mulch will have shallow roots, which equals easy removal. If you do find that you have weeds needing to be removed I recommend removing them by hand or with the help of a hula hoe. It's a tool that cuts weeds at their roots (and usually kills them). When applying mulch, I recommend a deep layer of mulch, about 6-8 inches, around all plants. This layer of mulch not only nourish the soil as it breaks down, but it will also provide insulation that will keep your plants cool and reducing evaporation.

Western Cedar Bark is one of my favorite mulches to use and it is easy to find at most local hardware stores.

Next up, if you do find that you have weeds sprouting up do not get frustrated and turn to the chemical culprits responsible for ruining our soils. Instead try one of the following organic options, but be sure to attend to your weeds before they produce seed heads or you will have weeds for months to come.

- Extreme Weed Control Formula by the Garden Guy:
 - 1 Gallon of Garden Guy 10% Vinegar
 - 3 tablespoons of orange oil (homemade or purchased as Zep's Heavy Duty Citrus Degreaser...available at home center stores or any cleanser with D-Limonene)
 - 1 – 2 drops of Dr. Bronner's Peppermint Soap (Whole Foods) or Dawn Dishwashing liquid
 - Put in plastic spray bottle, shake up and spray directly on anything you want to eliminate.
DO NOT spray on anything you want to live!!!

*When handling vinegar always wear protective eye wear, a mask and gloves.

- Garden-Ville Weed Killer or Bioganic Weed and Grass Killer
- Pelargonic Acid: read more about this organic weed control method at www.EPA.gov
- For a natural pre-emergent, try [WOW](#). It kills weed seeds before they germinate, and is made from a cornmeal by product.

**** Remember:** When using pre-emergent's, you will kill all seeds, including vegetables and flowers, so be choosy about where you spread it.

There is one thing to keep in mind... organic weed killers, such as Extreme Weed Control Formula, Pelargonic Acid, Garden-Ville Weed Killer, and Bioganic Weed and Grass Killer, do not kill roots, but rather work by burning the green foliage of the plant. For weeds with roots, such as dandelions, we recommend using the organic weed killer and then removing the roots by hand with the hula hoe.

Finally, Solarizing the soil is another option if you have a couple of days to wait for the weeds to die. Just take a piece of black plastic and cover the weeds and seal the plastic by holding the sides down with heavy rocks or bricks. It takes a day or two to work in the summer heat and a little longer when the weather is cooler. You can remove the plastic when the weeds have shriveled up and dried. It's a very effective, inexpensive, easy and safe way to kill weeds. Of course only do this in areas that have stand alone weeds, not in grass areas or any other plant life that you don't want to kill.