

## Weeds and How to Manage Them

A plant growing where you don't want it to - this is a working definition of a weed. Weed seeds arrive in your yard either by wind or carried in by birds. There are two basic groups of weeds, those that are grasses and those that are broadleaf and they can be classified as annuals or perennials. Annual weeds grow from seeds and grow, flower, produce seed and die within one season. Perennial weeds can live for several years. The control methods you choose will depend on what type of weed you are dealing with.

### Control

If you only have a few weeds in a relatively small area, mechanical removal is often the most desirable. This can be accomplished with sharp hoes, shovels, or hand pulling. C'mon, this is good exercise - therapeutic even. If applications of herbicides are warranted, it is important to select one that will target the weed you are dealing with and not harm surrounding vegetation. If you use grass killer on the crabgrass or nutsedge growing in your hybrid Bermuda lawn, it won't discriminate and will kill any "grass" it contacts.

**In gravel areas** both annual and perennial weeds can be controlled with the application of a **post-emergent** herbicide. Post-emergent meaning weeds that have already sprouted and are growing. The most common products for this application contain Glyphosate (Roundup) or Glufosinate (Finale). These herbicides work by translocating the product through the leaves to the roots where they interfere with the growth process. Both these products are non-selective, meaning they will kill any growing vegetation, both grass and broadleaf.

**In lawn areas** the best weed control is a healthy lawn. Turf will out-compete most weeds and regular mowing will remove the growing tips of the weeds. Any chemical weed control should be practiced only on well established lawns as newly installed or seeded lawns are often injured by weed control agents. Spot treatment with Glyphosate is effective especially in dormant winter Bermuda lawns.

**Pre-emergents** work very well in preventing weed seeds from sprouting and work best in gravel areas. Do not use a pre-emergent if you plan to establish a Bermuda grass lawn by seeding. The same is true in the fall if you overseed your hybrid Bermuda or Bermuda grass lawn - it will prevent the winter rye grass seeds from sprouting! Many pre-emergents are available from your local nursery or home improvement store. For example, a common pre-emergent herbicide has a chemical name of: 3, 5-dinitro-N<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>4</sub>-dipropylsulfanilamide. The common name is oryzalin. Ask the sales staff for assistance if you are unsure which product is a pre-emergent. Apply twice a year in April for summer weeds and September for control of winter weeds.

Many homes in Gilbert are built on old irrigated agricultural fields where nut sedge is sometimes a problem. For control of nut sedge (nut grass) in lawns, several applications of the product Manage in September will provide effective control. Some follow-up may be necessary.

**Caution:** Never use a total vegetation killer that is a soil sterilant. These products kill existing vegetation, persist in the soil for many years and can leach into surrounding areas seriously affecting or killing plants there. If you have an area in your yard where nothing will grow, a soil sterilant like Triox may have been applied there in the past.

Be careful when using products that contain 2-4-D. They are designed to be applied when the temperatures are cool. During most of the year this product volatilizes (turns to a gas) and can cause damage to surrounding vegetation as it drifts through the air.

Remember! Always follow label directions exactly! We sometimes think if a little is good, more is a whole lot better. The average homeowner applies 9 times more chemicals to their property than a farmer does on the same size land. With herbicides and insecticides, this can be deadly - to plants, pets and humans. Wear protective clothing and avoid skin contact with the product.

Common broadleaf weeds: Purslane, goosefoot, pigweed, puncturevine, London rocket, bur clover, cheeseweed, tumbleweed, silver nightshade, prostrate sparges.

Common grass type weeds: crabgrass, Bermuda grass, nutgrass (not really a grass), bromegrass, orchardgrass, common foxtail.

For more information on weeds use the on-line reference <http://ag.arizona.edu/urbanipm/weeds/weeds.html> and <http://ag.arizona.edu/urbanipm/weeds/weedcontrol.html>

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