

Weeds

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With the recent warming trend, it seems that weeds are coming up faster than you can pick them. But before you go out and buy the first weed killer you can find, know that most weed killers can have long-term effects on your soil and adjacent shrubs and trees. And some of them aren't safe for use around children and pets.

As opposed to using a lot of chemicals, my first line of defense against weeds is to remove 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).

In addition to removing weeds by hand, I also add 4 to 6 inches of native tree trimming mulch or 2 to 4 inches of gravel around my plants. This application is generally thick enough to block sunlight from penetrating the soil and stops weeds in their tracks. An added bonus is that mulch protects the earth from eroding.

It's important to remove weeds before they produce seed heads, otherwise you'll weeds for years to come. But if you can't get to them in time and your weeds are reproducing, try spraying them with products like Garden-Ville Weed Killer or Bioganic Weed and Grass Killer. Both products are environmentally friendly.

For a natural pre-emergent, try WOW. It kills weed seeds before they germinate, and is made from a cornmeal byproduct.

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

It is not organic, but when it comes to killing stubborn Bermuda grass, there is nothing that beats Roundup. I only use a little mixed with molasses, which acts as a bio-stimulant to help break down toxins. Be aware that it could take two to five applications of the Roundup/molasses combination to completely kill Bermuda grass, so be patient.