

Weekly Column for Week of 5-24-10
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Weed Control

Having some weeds in the yard should be expected and accepted because it is nearly impossible to have a completely weed free yard. Also, as I stated in previous articles, a little bit of weedy vegetation can attract insects, which in turn can attract more wildlife such as birds. Sometimes, however, weeds may appear to be drowning out everything you've worked hard to keep alive in your yard and you may feel the need to control them.

There are organic approaches to weed control such as using mulch. Mulch comes in many different textures such as chipped bark, straw, or hay. Plastic mulch can also be used and is best for warm season vegetables such as tomatoes and peppers because they tend to keep the soil warmer than other types of mulch. Another organic product that controls weeds is corn gluten meal. It is a pre-emergent organic weed killer, which means it must be applied before weeds emerge. If not timed correctly, desired control will not be achieved. And then, we must not underestimate our own strength. Even hand pulling is a recognized method of weed control and is most effective after a rainy period because it is easier to pull out the entire root system.

There are also many types of chemicals that are used to control weeds. Once your weed is identified, you will be able to locate an herbicide known to control it. It is important to follow label directions carefully to avoid unexpected problems or ineffective results.

There are many options for controlling weeds in your yard. As I mentioned before, living with some weeds is to be expected. For more information on weed control, you can visit the web at <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/HO-217.pdf>. You can also contact your Elkhart County Extension office for more information.

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