

Weeds

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Home Vegetable Production

Nonchemical Control

In most home garden situations, it is more practical to use cultural methods of weed control rather than chemical. A hoe and rototiller are very effective if weeds are not allowed to get ahead. Mulching is also very practical in a home garden situation. The mulch could be several layers of newspaper, black plastic, or sawdust. **Caution:** Do not mulch with grass clippings from a lawn that has been sprayed to control broadleaf weeds. See VCE Publication 427-035, *Weed Control in the Vegetable Garden*, for additional information on ways to control weeds in home vegetable gardens.

In areas infected with nutsedge, bermudagrass, or similar troublesome weeds, black plastic mulch can be placed over tilled soil and then plants such as tomatoes or peppers can be planted by punching holes in the plastic. During the growing season, the weeds will starve beneath the black plastic. The next year, this process can be repeated in an adjacent area and row crops planted in the area where the plastic was the previous year. Perennial weeds such as nutsedge and bermudagrass may, however, break through black plastic in places.

Sanitation is another important aspect of home gardening. If you allow weeds to mature and seed, you create more severe weed problems for the years ahead. When a crop is harvested, cultivate the area to prevent weeds from maturing and seeding.

Chemical Control

There are many herbicides cleared for use in vegetable crops. However, most of these are designed for commercial vegetable production rather than the home garden. They are formulated in large packages, require precise rates of application, and may leave residues in the soil that would interfere with growing other plants in the area the next growing season.

Trifluralin (Preen Garden Weed Preventer) is cleared on a wide variety of vegetables, has good crop tolerance, is readily available in small quantities, and is available to gardeners. It is a preemergent herbicide and kills weeds as they germinate. It remains active in the soil about 8 weeks during the growing season. Application rate ranges from 1 lb per 640 sq feet to 1 lb per 1,280 sq ft depending upon soil type. Rake into the top 1 to 3 inches of soil immediately after application.

Table 2.6 - Preen Garden Weed Preventer Use

Vegetable	Time of Application
<i>Vegetables Cleared for Preen Garden Weed Preventer¹ (trifluralin) application</i>	
broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, collard, black eyed peas, field peas, green peas, lima beans, mustard greens, snap beans, turnip greens	From seed
celery, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, eggplant, peppers, onions, tomatoes	Before transplanting
asparagus	Established plants only, apply prior to spear emergence
potatoes	After planting
<i>Weeds Controlled at Time of Germination Only</i>	
Annual bluegrass, Barnyardgrass, Carpetweed, Common chickweed, Fall panicum, Goosegrass, Green foxtail, Large crabgrass, Johnsongrass from seed, Common lambsquarters, Purslane, Prostrate spurge, Redroot pigweed, Smooth crabgrass, Spiny pigweed, Spotted spurge, Stinkgrass, Witchgrass, Yellow foxtail	
<i>Weeds Not Controlled</i>	
Velvetleaf, Common ragweed, Mustards, Jimsonweed, Galinsoga (Quickweed), Yellow nutsedge	
¹ No established perennial weeds or emerged annual weeds are controlled by Preen Garden Weed Preventer.	

Perennial weeds

Perennial vines and weeds (bermudagrass, poison ivy, dock, honeysuckle, etc.) around the garden borders or in the tilled area may be controlled with a postemergence application of glyphosate (Roundup or other labeled formulations) after completion of the summer vegetable harvest. For small areas or individual weed treatments, the Roundup formulation is packaged in small quantities suitable for home use and does not require special sprayers. Many of the perennial weeds are more effectively controlled when treated in late summer or fall before frost causes the leaves to drop. Since glyphosate is not biologically active in the soil, it cannot result in residue problems.

Do not spray vegetables with a sprayer that has been used to apply 2,4-D