

**Low Carbon Communities Initiative**

**Networking Key Services- NKS**

**Getting rid of weeds**

**Methods and Recipes**

The hardest part of having a garden is and they will all tell you the same thing – getting rid of weeds.

Invasive plants are everywhere and it’s no wonder why we have so many commercial weed killers on the market. However, synthetic pesticides pose a threat to children and pets if swallowed. Fortunately, there’s quite a lot of ways to get rid of weeds naturally. Some of these eco-friendly methods are here as follows…

**Methods**

**Weeding By Hand**

This is the most basic and easy way to dispose of the pesky plants growing in your garden.

Use a handy tool, such as a claw or trowel, to loosen the weed roots. After that, pull the weed by the root. Use gloves to avoid spreading seeds anywhere else.

**Boiling Hot Water**

Prepare a kettle of hot water and take it to your garden. Make sure you aim around the crown of the undesired plant. For some plant sorts it might take several tries, but it will kill them eventually and your garden will be once again weed-free.

This method is also good for spots you plan to replant, because it won’t damage the soil.

**Landscape Fabric**

If you’d like to suppress weed growth in pathways, you can install a landscape fabric or ask for professional landscapers to do so. Usually, the fabric is covered with a layer of mulch, and that’s another place where weeds can develop. However, their roots will be shallow and pulling them off will be a piece of cake.

This method is as animal-friendly as it gets, but try not to let your dog dig through the fabric.

**Salt**

Pure salt dehydrates plant leaves and sabotages the proper moisture intake of the weed’s root system.

You can mix it up with some water to make a potent solution.

Utilise this method carefully as water and salt solutions can be deadly for regular plants as much as for weeds.

It’s best to use it in small amounts otherwise; salt may permanently damage your soil.

**Vinegar**

Pure vinegar (white or cider), just like salt, causes dehydration to unwanted plants, although strong on its own, white vinegar can become even deadlier to undesired plants, when combined with some ingredients.

**Vinegar weeds killer recipes:**

* **Vinegar and Lemon Juice**

What do these ingredients have in common? They both have high acidity levels. Combine them and you’ve got yourself a natural herbicide which kills first and asks questions later.

**Procedure:**buy vinegar with at least 10% acetic acid. Pour a quart of that vinegar (about 1 litre) in a spray bottle and add 4 ounces (113 millilitres) of lemon juice. You’re set to go, but even though natural, this herbicide cans till sting your skin and eyes. We recommend you wear safety gloves and goggles.

* **Vinegar and Salt**

Salt dehydrates plants and that’s why it works well with vinegar. It also makes your salad taste better, just like vinegar, but that’s another topic altogether.

**Procedure:**add one cup of table salt to a container full of vinegar. Caution: this solution is very strong. Use it only for weeds between tiles and cement cracks. If it gets into your soil, it will damage it and nothing would ever grow there. For maximum effect add some liquid dish soap to the solution. This will ensure the solution will better stick to the weed of choice.

* **Vinegar and Soap**

Liquid soap will hardly help neutralise pungent smell of vinegar, but it will definitely improve its weed killing properties.

**Procedure:**fill a container with one gallon (about 3 litres) of vinegar. Then add one ounce (28 millilitres) of dish soap. That’s it, really. Little known fact:you can use this solution for killing pests as well.

Vinegar also evaporates quickly after use, so your cat and dog can walk safely in the garden.

**Mulch**

Cover the soil with grass clippings, wood chips, sawdust, shredded bark, and other organic materials to stop sunlight from reaching the soil. This, in turn, should kill the unwelcome plants. Mulch also prevents new weed seeds from entering the soil.

**Newspaper**

Newspapers quickly go out of date, but fortunately they can still serve your garden well.

Use old newspapers to cover low-growing plants. Make the cover at least four layers thick.

Eventually, the lack of sunlight will be the demise of your weeds and will stop weed seeds from developing.

**Vodka**

Mix this strong alcohol with some water and put your new organic herbicide in a spray bottle.

The vodka to water ratio depends on how stubborn your undesired plants are. Spray the nasty weeds and watch as they dry out. Be advised – this method works best on sun-loving invasive plants.

**Fire**

A propane torch is probably the best natural herbicide you can get. Do be careful with this method though as you don’t want to burn your “good” plants in the process.

**Cornmeal**

Not really a weed killing method, but rather a weed prevention one. No seeds will grow into plants when sprinkled with this meal ground. Rest assured, it’s a pet-safe weeding method.

Top of Form

**Carpet Scraps**

Got an old carpet you no longer need? Cut it up into scraps and use them as a weed barrier.

The old carpet pieces will stop invasive plants from growing and still allow water to drain.

Keep in mind that the scraps should not remain on the soil for more than a year.

**Ground Cover Plants**

Ground cover plants are great when you need to cover bare patches of soil and, wouldn’t you know it, they also compete with weeds. In fact, they are so competitive that they will deprive the weeds of their much-needed nutrients, water, and sunlight.

Note: you need to find information on ground cover plant types

**Eating**

Weeds are, after all, plants and some of them are perfectly edible. Some examples of weeds you can prepare for dinner include: curly dock, wild amaranth (pigweed), dandelion, red clover, watercress, and chickweed.

**Sugar**

Sugar can also be used to get rid of pesky weeds. Just pour some around the invasive plant root and let the ingredient do its job. There is a slight downside, however. Sugar is likely to attract ants and other sweet loving bugs.

**Lemon Juice**

The citric acid from freshly squeezed lemons will make any weeds shrivel away and die in a few days. Fun fact: ants really don’t like lemon juice either. No need to call an exterminator, instead drive them away with some lemon juice.

So there you have it, your own guide to dealing with invasive plants in your garden. Natural methods are highly effective when combined together – choose several of the above methods for maximum effect.