

Over the Garden Gate



<http://www.overthegardengate.org>

Weeds, Weeds, and More Weeds

Weeds can be a huge challenge, whether in the lawn, vegetable garden, flower bed, or shrub plantings. Simply stated, a weed is an unwanted plant. One person's weed is another person's wildflower or native plant. Regardless, if you say it is a weed, then it is one.



Selecting effective, environmentally sound management strategies and properly identifying the weeds you hope to manage are critical first steps.

It may sound surprising, but weed-killing chemicals (herbicides) are the last strategy, not the first. Below is a list of strategies and supporting information for

the first to employ tactics to the last.

1. Preparing the soil in your planting beds and vegetable gardens. Desirable plants grow better and faster in well-prepared soil, therefore competing successfully against weeds. Once the planting bed matures the shrubs and plants will shade out or retard weed growth.



2. Prevent weeds from being brought into your landscape. The main way weeds enter landscapes is through trucked-in contaminated topsoil or poor-quality turf grass sod. In inspect topsoil loads before they are



dumped, and choose sod that has no visible weeds.

3. Mowing regularly is the best strategy to keep the weeds in check in your lawn. Few weeds can compete with vigorously growing, dense turf grasses, such as Bermuda, St. Augustine, and Zoysia.

4. Hand pulling weeds from the lawn, planting beds, and vegetable garden is a sure way to successfully eliminate weeds. Persistence is critical.

5. Mulching planting beds and gardens will also deter weeds effectively. Applying 2 to 3 inches of mulch will keep the weed seed from sprouting, keep light away from weed seedlings, smother the seedlings, retard weed growth, or make the weeds easier to pull.

6. Using the right herbicide for the right weed is the final strategy.

Source: Doug Welsh's Texas Garden Almanac

LOCALS

APRIL 7: Wichita County Master Gardener Association monthly meeting is at Wichita County Extension Office, 2nd floor, 6th and Scott, Wichita Falls, TX.

Time: 5:30 p.m.

APRIL 9: Red River Native Plant Society monthly meeting is at the Kemp Center for the Arts, 1300 Lamar, Wichita Falls, Texas. **Time: 6:00 p.m.**

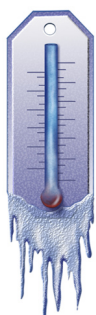
APRIL 20: Red River Orchid Society monthly meeting is at the Kemp Center for the Arts, 1300 Lamar, Wichita Falls, Texas. **Time: 7:00 p.m.**

APRIL 21: Burkburnett Garden Club monthly meeting is at the Community Room of the Fidelity Bank. **Time: 5:30 p.m. Contact: Rex Bristol 636-0486**

APRIL 23: Texoma Water Garden Society monthly meeting. **Time: 6:30 p.m. (pot luck dinner) or 7:00 p.m. for meeting.**

APRIL 23: Organic Gardening in Wichita Falls by John Mark Hirschi at the Woman's Forum, 2120 Speedway. Sponsored by the Woman's Forum Garden Club. Lunch reservations required. **Time: Noon**

MAY 16: Wichita County Master Gardener Association Garden Tour. **Time: 9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**



Freeze-Dates for Wichita Falls

° Last Spring Freeze:

3/27

° First Fall Freeze: 11/10

° Freeze-Free Days: 228

Best Tips from Master Gardeners

Home-tested tips and ideas compiled by Ann Wilson of Geneva, Illinois and published in the December/January 2009 issue of *BACKYARD LIVING*.

1. Orient rows of vegetable plants on a north-south axis so they receive both morning and afternoon sun. —Kathy Lewis, Kerrville, TX



Flower of the Month: Lily

Common Name: Lily.
Botanical Name: Liliium.
Family: Liliaceae

The pure white lily in Victorian flower language translated as youth ful innocence. The lily is deeply identified with the ancient goddesses of the Western world. In Rome, it was said that the first lily sprang from the breast milk of the Great Goddess Juno, empress of nature. In the middle East, the lily was sacred to Astarte, the primal goddess of fertility. Christianity too associated the lily with the feminine deity, ascribing it to the Virgin Mary.

The English word chalice is derived from calyx, the cup of the lily flower.

2. Save small pudding and yogurt containers for seed starting.

—Peggy Beach, Chesterfield, VA

3. Stick garden tools into a bucket of sand amended with a can of motor oil. This helps keep tools clean and sharp after gardening.

—Penny Mason, Clarkston, MI

4. Paint tool handles bright colors so you can locate tools in the garden. —Paul Rodman, Allen Park, MI

5. Amend clay soil with mushroom compost. This lightens and nourishes the soil.

—Roy Hoyez, Neosho, MO

6. Mix bonemeal and Epsomsalts into the soil when planting tomatoes to prevent blossom-end rot.

—Myra L. Simmons, Hurricane, WV

7. Cut lower branches from 2-foot-high tomato plants to discourage soil-related diseases and ease watering. —Bonnie Lixey, Nt. Morris, MI

8. When you plant a rosebush, place a banana peel in the planting hole; it's good fertilizer.

—Roberta Beatty, Harrison, AK



Work Day Dates and Times to be Announced at the April Meeting

STATE S

MARCH 7—APRIL 12: The 25th Annual Dallas Blooms at the Dallas Arboretum. 214-515-6500 Open Daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

APRIL 23-24 & 25: 2009 Texas Master Gardener State Conference: Marshall, TX. The conference will feature world class azaleas, dogwood and crape myrtles. Harrison County Master Gardener Association
c/o Extension Office, 102 West Houston, Marshall, TX. 75670
(903) 935-8413
See this link for more information:
<http://tcaaa.tamu.edu/09statemeeting.htm>

JUNE 1-3: Rain Water Harvesting Master Gardener Specialist Training. Granbury, Texas. Only 30 participant spots are available for this training, so please submit your registration forms in as soon as possible. Registration is on a first come/first serve basis. Payment and forms must be in our office by May 15, 2009. Contact Marty Vahlenkamp, 817-579-3280, to answer any questions or provide further information.

JUNE 29-30: Texas Master Gardener Vegetable Specialist Training Somervell County Expo Center, Glen Rose, Texas. Hosted by Somervell County Master Gardeners and AgriLife Extension Service Master Gardener
Registration information will be forthcoming. Please check the TMGA web site soon for more information.



Association Contacts:

Lulu Canan, *President* 691-4496; Paula Savage, *Vice President* 691-0231; Gail Elmore, *Secretary* 569-0188; Beth Turlington, *Treasurer* 692-7570

Committees Chairperson:

Paula Savage, *Newsletter* 691-0231; Beth Turlington 692-7570 and Mary Barry 592-2075, *Web Site*; Jerry Warren, *Volunteer and Advanced Training Hours Recorder* 767-2020 or enenjay@nts-online.net

State Directors: Peg Marquardt, Mary Barry, Delores Lane and Jeff Smith

Specialists: Peg Marquardt, Rainwater Harvesting and Plant Propagation; Mary Barry, Jr Master Gardener Advisor:

Tara McKnight, CEA-Hort, Texas Cooperative Extension, Wichita County (940)716-8610