

## Weed control around the garden

---

Not only do weeds look unsightly, they also compete with plants for light, water and nutrients. Weed growth can be suppressed by using a layer of **mulch** (e.g. composted bark or bark chips) or planting through plastic sheeting (covering this with bark or gravel where used around ornamental plants for a more aesthetic look). For best results, apply mulch in the early spring before weeds have had a chance to grow/become established. Another cultural method of control for annual weeds (those which can be pulled up easily, including the root systems) control can be through either **hoeing**, which works best in dry weather and when the weeds are young. Annual weeds can also be controlled quickly and easily by chemical means (see below). For more difficult weeds, such as perennials, where it is difficult to get the whole root system out manually and the weeds can regenerate from small pieces of root material, it is often necessary to employ the use of weedkillers for more effective and less labour-intensive control.

### Weed control in mixed borders

This can be difficult, especially if a border is thickly planted. The best choice of weedkiller product not only depends upon how closely the plants are growing to the weeds, but what types of weeds are present. If the weeds are mainly annuals and they are not growing too close to cultivated plants then a weedkiller such as Weedol Gun! or Bayer Advanced Bed & Border Weedkiller may be the best option. These products can be directed at weeds relatively accurately and are available in different sizes according to area to be treated. If the weeds are deep-rooted (difficult/impossible to pull up!) then a systemic weedkiller, based on glyphosate, such as Bayer Glyphosate Kills Weeds & Roots or Round Up would be more effective. Both these products are available as Ready-to-use guns for reasonably accurate application in borders. If even greater accuracy is needed – for example if weeds are growing extremely close or in among cultivated plants, chose a product such as Bayer bed & Border Spot Weeder, which will be effective against both annual and perennial weeds.

### Shrub borders

Where only established shrubs and/or roses are present in a border, pre-emergence weedkillers (eg Casoron G4 Weedblock) are a very useful, timesaving option. They are applied to weed-free soil in spring and will keep the border free of weeds all season. Because of their mode of action you would not be able to grow other, non-woody, plants in the border that was treated. However, you could perhaps reserve one border for shrubs and roses and incorporate plants that would give a long period of colour and then have a mixed border/other types of plants elsewhere or use pots to grow annuals, bulbs and herbaceous perennial in.

### Vegetable plots

Growing vegetables in rows makes for easy maintenance. To get rid of difficult perennial weeds prior to planting or sowing, use a glyphosate based weedkiller such as those mentioned above in either the autumn or spring as long as the weather conditions are not too cold or dry, as weeds need to be in active growth for systemic weedkillers to work effectively. In drier weather, hoe out annual weeds where they are growing in between rows of vegetables or use a contact weedkiller such as Weedol, with a dribble bar on the end of the watering can for more accurate application.

### Paths and patios

For long-term weed control, choose a path weedkiller with residual action (e.g. Pathclear, Bayer Path & Patio Weedkiller, Sodium Chlorate). These products will not only kill the weeds that are present, they will prevent new ones from growing for several months.

### Lawns

Many spring lawn fertilizers also have a weedkiller incorporated, which is useful for the control of larger, broad-leaved weeds in lawns. However for more difficult weeds it is better to apply a straight lawn weedkiller such as Verdane 2 or Vitax Lawnclear. Using a spot lawn weedkiller can treat the occasional weed. For further details, please see our lawncare factsheets.