

REPTON GREEN FINGERS

Editor Pauline Little

WEEDS IN THE GARDEN

The trouble with weeds is that they grow so well, there is nowhere that they won't grow.

So how do you know it is a weed? Here are a few rules of thumb to identify a weed

- anything growing in a path
- growing in the middle of prized plant
- hundreds of them together
- lots more in other parts of the garden

If you are not sure or you are new to the garden

- Ask someone else – weeds are pretty universal
- Remove most but leave one or two
- Ask yourself if you like it anyway – many weeds are all leaf and minute flowers and there are often much better alternatives
- Let it grow and see what happens

A good site for weed identification is

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/common-weeds>

Jobs to do in March in the garden

[HTTPS://HUB.SUTTONS.CO.UK/GARDENING-ADVICE/IN-YOUR-GARDEN-MARCH](https://hub.suttons.co.uk/gardening-advice/in-your-garden-march)

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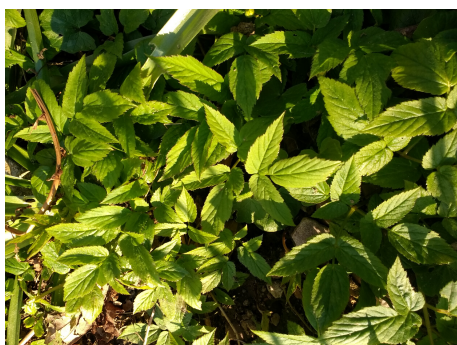
THE REAL NASTIES

The real nasties like ground elder, horsetail and convolvulus (bindweed) really need to be tackled with weedkiller. The best place for information is "no dig gardener" – Roger's blog is amazing and he always gives tried and tested advice you'll spend a morning surfing and know all about glyphosate weedkiller (roundup) use.

<http://www.nodiggardener.co.uk/2017/10/using-glyphosate-safely-and-effectively.html>



Horsetail



Ground Elder



Bindweed



Bulbs can be a pain too

What is a weed?
A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.
R W Emerson (1803 - 1882)

March 2020

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OTHER NASTIES

The other nasties like nettle, dock and dandelion can be dug out but roundup (glyphosate) will do a better job.

If the roots are shallow eg buttercups get a hoe or spade and slice under the base of the plant.

If it has a tap root, that is a single long root that goes down into the ground, you need to go very deep and quite wide with a spade or a fork as they are prone to snapping and gently ease the root out of the ground and put it in the brown bin. I get too many welsh poppies so I treat them like this too. If the weed spreads with underground roots, you need to get them all out, tricky especially if they go into other plants



Dandelion with tap root



Rose Bay Willow Herb running root

ANNUAL WEEDS

Annual weeds are often low growing and produce thousands of babies in the blink of an eye. Examples are bittercress, speedwell, groundsel (derived from ground steal), that pesky red oxalis and goose grass. Others are hawk weed, herb robert and broad leaved willow herb.

Get to them asap – if they are small they will pull up without a tool, otherwise use a hand fork. If it is hot and dry just leave the weeds on the ground or put them in the brown bin if it is wet.

DON'T LET THEM SEED



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WHAT NEXT ?

Once you have got rid of the worst of your weeds you need a plan to stop them all coming back again.

The answer is stop digging and start covering the soil up with a mulch which makes a huge difference.

- It reduces the number of weed seeds that arrive on the soil and germinate
- It makes it easier to remove weeds
- It looks nice
- It makes you think twice about digging

To stop the weeds growing from below you can put a membrane down first.

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WHY MULCH ?

A mulch will

- Conserve the moisture
- Allow surface water to drain better
- Keep it warmer in winter and cooler in summer
- if it is organic, in time it will improve the soil

**Where is this dandelion
- you know it well**



WHAT MULCH ?

Lots of choice

- Gravel is permanent but quite costly and is best laid on a membrane
- Composted bark is good, looks nice and not too expensive
- Strulch (mineralised straw) is great but a bit pricey
- Chippings from a tree surgeon may be free if fresh or not too expensive if it has been left for 6 months
- Garden compost but it may be a bit seedy
- Grass clippings on newspaper - free and goes brown after a couple of weeks (we put it next to our raspberries)

Coming soon

- Starting in the veg patch
- Dividing your hostas

**Post any questions or
comments on
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