



J&L Garden Center

The All Season Gift and Garden Center

620 North 500 West Bountiful, Utah 801-292-0421

info@JLGardenCenter.com

www.JLGardenCenter.com

Prevent Weeds In Your Gardens

Perhaps my least favorite job in my garden is pulling the weeds. A week after I finish weeding, another crop of weeds is already starting to take over the garden; the weeds never stop. Weed seeds are always in the soil, and they can remain dormant for years. Once brought to the surface, with a little water and sunlight, they'll start to grow, even if they are 10 to 20 years old. Therefore, one method of weed prevention is to disturb the soil as little as possible. Another method is to cultivate the soil frequently. In any event, be sure to kill weeds before they can produce flowers and go to seed, which will multiply your problem for many more years to come.



By preventing weeds from starting to grow, you can enjoy your garden without all the extra work. Many types of weed preventers are available including: **Mechanical** (hoeing and cultivating); **Physical** (plastic and mulches); and **Chemical**. Choose the weed preventer method that will work best for you in your gardens and you can start enjoying your gardening experience even more!



Physical Weed Preventers.

Black plastic has been used for years to prevent weeds from growing. Black plastic also helps to warm the soil and to help maintain moisture in the soil. The disadvantages of plastic are; the plastic may prevent water from entering the soil, it may keep too much water in the soil, it may not let enough oxygen reach the plant's roots, and the plastic may actually suffocate your plants



Clear plastic prevents weeds in a different way than black plastic. Clear plastic helps kill weeds, and their seeds, by creating a greenhouse condition that actually helps weeds grow faster. During the hot summer weather the temperature gets so hot under the plastic that the weed plants burn up and die. Clear plastic can 'solar sterilize' the soil and get rid of many unwanted weeds, insects, and diseases. The disadvantages of clear plastic are similar to black plastic. In addition, clear plastic will also kill other good plants growing within the plastic, because of the extreme heat. You may want to "Solar Sterilize" your soil, remove the clear plastic and put down black plastic, and then plant your vegetables and flowers.

Weed Cloth is a great weed preventing product. It prevents weeds in a similar manner as black plastic, but it is a woven material with pores, so it allows water and oxygen to penetrate into the soil. The plants are easy to water and they can still breathe. Be careful because the soil will stay wet longer, similar to black plastic, so it is easy to over-water your plants and kill them with too much kindness.



Depending on the brand, weed cloth will last from 5 to 20 years. The sun is the worst enemy to weed cloth. Your weed cloth will last a lot longer if covered with bark or rock; to eliminate the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.

Weed cloth is one of the best solutions for weed prevention in permanent gardens and shrub areas. Weed cloth works well for vegetable and annual flower gardens, however you need to remove it and roto till the soil every year.



Occasionally a few tough weeds such as morning glory, quack grass, and bermuda grass will grow right through the weed cloth. If these weeds do grow through the weed cloth, just spray

them with Killzall or Roundup once a month until they die; then the weed cloth will prevent them from sprouting again.

Another problem with weed cloth is that dirt will start to accumulate on top of the weed cloth. Your mulch will also start to decompose and create a layer of organic matter on top of the weed cloth. This layer of soil and organic materials is an excellent medium for weed seeds to germinate. These weeds will not be able to establish a deep root system, but they may still be a nuisance in your gardens. You may need to use a weed preventing chemical such as **Casoron** or **Treflan** to help prevent these unwanted weed seeds from germinating on top of your weedcloth.



Newspaper, Straw, and Grass clippings are mulches that can help prevent weeds. They may look a little tacky, but they do prevent weeds. Apply several layers of newspapers on the soil to form a complete barrier. Watch out for slugs and snails in the garden, they love the cool moist soil under the newspaper. Straw works great but you may get more weed seeds than you prevent, depending on the type of straw you buy. A layer of Grass clippings work well. Add an inch or two of grass clippings each week, don't just put a big layer on all at once. You can work all of these mulches into the soil at the end of each growing season.



Bark is an excellent mulch that prevents weeds very well. Bark is available in many sizes, shapes, and colors. Bark can be spread on top of weed cloth, or you can spread 2" to 6" of bark directly on top of the soil. Depending how deep you spread the bark, you can prevent weeds up to four or five years. Two inches of bark will usually prevent weeds for a year or two, while four to six inches of bark may prevent weeds four or five years. If morning glory, bermuda grass, or other tough weeds, start growing through the bark, you can just spray the weeds with Killzall or Roundup without disturbing the barrier. You can add an inch of new bark every few years to help maintain the effectiveness of the bark. You can also apply a weed preventing chemical to enhance the bark's natural weed preventing characteristics.



Chemical Weed Preventers.

Chemical weed preventers can be a great benefit to both you and your gardens. Many different chemicals are available. Unfortunately one weed preventer is not the best for all situations. If you choose the correct chemical weed preventer and apply it properly, the weed preventer will take the chore out of gardening. Listed below are a few of the most common weed preventing chemicals and a brief description where they may be used. *As with all chemicals, you must read the entire label before you apply any Weed Preventing Chemicals. Be sure to choose the right product for the area you are treating.*

Soil Sterilants (sold as **Total Vegetation Killer, Triox, Noxall**) are a group of weed preventers that keep weeds and plants from growing from one to five years, depending how concentrated you apply them. Unfortunately these types of weed preventers are not biodegradable. They remain active for many years, and they may even move deeper into the soil with the irrigation water. If you apply a soil sterilant near a plant, or under the dripline of a tree, it may take three or four years for the chemical to reach the root system and either damage or kill the plant. Soil sterilants may also travel down a hill, or horizontally in the soil, and kill a plant several hundred feet away. There is no "changing of the mind" once one of these products has been applied. The improper application of these products may cause GREAT damage to your yard, or to your neighbor's property. *In my opinion: "Soil sterilants should not be used in the home yard, except in very special circumstances."*

Casoron is one of the strongest weed preventers that works well for an extended time, and is safe for most home gardeners. Casoron lasts from six to nine months in the garden. Casoron kills seeds as they start to germinate. Casoron can also kill tender roots and many young plants. Casoron may be used around shrubs, roses, and trees. Casoron may also be used in the raspberry patch, around fruit trees and under grape vines. The best time to apply casoron is in the fall, or very early in the spring. **Casoron may not be used in annual flower gardens, or in vegetable gardens. Be careful using Casoron in perennial flower gardens.**

Gallery (sold as **Fertilome Broadleaf Weed Control with Gallery**) only kills seeds as they germinate. Gallery will not kill any existing plants. Gallery prevents a very wide range of non-grassy weeds such as spurge, oxalis, chickweed and even dandelions (Gallery only prevents the dandelions germinating this year, it does not kill the dandelions already growing from last year). Gallery is an excellent broadleaf weed preventer and it also works fairly well at preventing many grass weeds. Gallery lasts four to six months, even in hot weather. Gallery may be applied to lawns, flowers, shrubs and trees. **Gallery may not be used in vegetable gardens.**

Treflan (sold as **Weed & Grass Stopper, Preen, Prevent**) kills seeds as they germinate. Treflan will not control existing plants or roots. Treflan may be applied before you plant some seeds; at the same time you plant other varieties of seeds; or you must wait until other varieties of seeds have sprouted. The treflan label lists the

types of seeds and the time of application, so be sure to read the label before using it. To avoid confusion, we recommend that you wait until all your seeds have sprouted, and that all of your transplants have been growing for a least a week or two before applying tre-

flan. Treflan may be used around trees, shrubs, and groundcovers. Treflan may be applied around flowers and used in vegetable gardens. Treflan will prevent crabgrass, chickweed, purslane, pigweed and many other garden weeds. However you should not use it in your lawn because it may damage some of the new shoots. Treflan will prevent weeds from 90 to 120 days. **Treflan is one of the best all around weed preventers for use in home gardens.**

Barricade (Sold as **IFA Crabgrass Preventer, Fertilome Crabgrass All-Season Crabgrass Preventer**) kills seeds as they start to germinate; it has no post emergence control. This product will control both annual grasses and broadleaf weeds: it will provide effective control for both crabgrass and spurge. It also controls most of the other common lawn weeds in this area. Barricade is great for lawns and will remain active up to 4 months, longer than most other crabgrass controls. Barricade can also be used in established shrub areas and around ornamental trees. **It cannot be used in the vegetable gardens or around fruit trees.**

Dimension (sold as **Hi Yield Crabgrass Control**) kills grass seeds as they start to germinate. In addition to the pre-emergent control of grass seeds, **Dimension** will also kill young, immature grass plants until they are about two or three weeks old. If you happen to apply your crabgrass control a little late, this would be the best type to apply. However, **Dimension** is not very effective in preventing spurge, oxalis, or other broadleaf weeds.

Pendamethylene (sold as **Scotts Halt**) kills both grass and non-grass seeds as they germinate. This product is very effective on spurge. This product is not labeled for use in either flower or vegetable gardens but it is a good product for the lawn areas. We sell this product without fertilizer so that you can apply it around the edges of the lawn near sidewalks, driveways, and gardens to help prevent weeds that may start to grow after the initial application of crabgrass control has quit working. Use your regular crabgrass preventer (with fertilizer) in April, as recommended, and then apply **Halts** around the edges of the lawn about six weeks later. You do not need to apply **Halts** over the entire lawn area the second time because it does not contain any fertilizer. Most lawns do not get many weeds in the middle areas; usually just around the edges.

Corn Gluten (sold as **Concern Weed Prevention Plus, Preen Organic Weed Preventer**) It is an organic pre emergent that only kills the roots of sprouting seeds. Corn Gluten is an animal feed by-product. It is organic, and it can be used safely in both vegetable and flower gardens. It can also be used in lawns, around roses, trees and shrubs. It does not kill existing plants, it just kills seeds as they germinate. Unfortunately, it is only effective for 4 to 6 weeks so you will need to re-apply this product regularly during the spring, summer and fall.

Surflan (sold as **Monterey Weed Impede**) A great pre-emergence herbicide for use around flowers, trees, roses, bulbs, ground covers, shrubs, rock gardens, driveways, and unplanted areas: it cannot be used in a vegetable garden, or around edible plants. Surflan lasts about 4 months, and is a little stronger than treflan. The orange color helps let you know where it has been applied, but it may stain concrete, brick, wood and stucco.

Be Careful and Stay alert!

Chemical labels and recommendations are constantly changing. Make sure you read the entire label before applying any chemicals in your yard, even if you have used the same chemical before, in previous years.

Good gardeners should never forget that pesticides designed to kill weeds can be dangerous for people, as well. That is why it is So Important to select garden chemicals carefully, apply them correctly, and always read and follow all instructions on the label - to the letter.

