

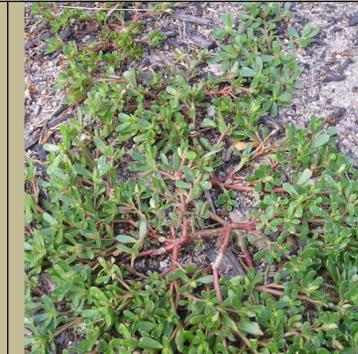
# Common Weeds of Vegetable Gardens

**A weed is a plant growing out of place. Weeds compete with desired plants for sunlight, water and nutrients. Strategies to combat weeds:** Plant densely to crowd out weeds • Mulch • If you don't mulch, hoe and cultivate frequently • Remove weeds before they go to seed • Do not compost weeds that have gone to seed or perennial weeds • Do not leave unplanted soil bare—cover it • Take revenge on some (edible) weeds by eating them (but don't plant them!) • If you use an herbicide, make sure it is approved for vegetable gardens, follow the directions carefully, and do not spray on windy days or when bees are present.

**Perennial weeds** will come back every year. They may spread by roots, rhizomes, stolons (runners), and/or seeds. Dig out perennial weeds and try to dig the entire root; any remaining pieces can regenerate. Tilling will chop up roots and may start many new plants.

				
<b>Bermuda grass</b> ( <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> ) "Wiregrass". Forms dense mats. Grows aggressively via stolons and rhizomes. Control is difficult; Persistent removal, solarization and plastic mulch may help.	<b>Canada thistle</b> ( <i>Cirsium arvense</i> ) Invasive. Purple flowers. Spreads by rhizomes and seeds. Vigorous root system. One stalk can produce 1500 seeds. Persistence is necessary for control.	<b>Bindweed</b> ( <i>Convolvulus sepium</i> ) "Wild morning glory". Twining vine. Extensive root system. Spreads via seeds and rhizomes. Hand weeding is the most effective control.	<b>Mugwort</b> ( <i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> ) "Chrysanthemum weed". Green leaves with silvery undersides. Spreads primarily by rhizomes.	<b>Poison Ivy</b> ( <i>Toxicodendron radicans</i> ) Spreads by seed and rhizomes. All parts of the plant contain urushiol, an oil that can cause a severe rash. Birds and wildlife feed on the seeds.
				
<b>Mint</b> ( <i>Mentha</i> ) This herb becomes invasive if not managed. Mints have square stems, opposite leaves and are aromatic. They spread by stolons. Hand-pull when the soil is wet. Edible.	<b>Clover</b> ( <i>Trifolium repens</i> ) Can form large clumps. Control by hand-pulling, hoeing and/or mulch. Benefits the soil by fixing nitrogen.	<b>Yellow nutsedge</b> ( <i>Cyperus esculentus</i> ) Grass-like. Triangular stems. Spreads via tubers on rhizomes. Competes with crops and suppresses growth via soil toxins. Hand-pull or shallowly cultivate frequently.	<b>Broadleaf dock</b> ( <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> ) Taproot can grow 5 feet deep. Spreads primarily by seed. A single plant can produce 60,000 seeds. Control with tillage or cutting root at least 3" below soil level.	<b>Plantain</b> ( <i>Plantago major</i> & <i>P. Lanceolata</i> ) Can produce up to 14,000 seeds per year. Young leaves are edible. Control by hand-digging and mulching.

**Annual weeds** spread by thousands of seeds. Pull weeds before they go to seed. Do not compost seed heads. Mulch to discourage seed germination.

				
<b>Hairy bittercress</b> ( <i>Cardamine hirsuta</i> ) Has an exploding seedpod. Each plant can produce thousands of seeds. The plant is easily hand-pulled before seedpods form. Edible.	<b>Galinsoga</b> ( <i>Galinsoga ciliate</i> & <i>G. parviflora</i> ) "Quickweed". Easily pulled. Spreads by thousands of seeds. Edible	<b>Wood sorrel</b> ( <i>Oxalis stricta</i> ) Spreads via seeds and rhizomes. Best controlled by hand-pulling and mulching. Edible.	<b>Smartweed</b> ( <i>Polygonum pensylvanicum</i> ) Pink beadlike seeds. Leaves may have purple spot in middle. Can grow 3 feet high. Shallow taproot. Control by hand-pulling when young.	<b>Purslane</b> ( <i>Portulaca oleracea</i> ) Succulent fleshy leaves. Spreads via seeds (which can remain viable in the soil for 40 years). Forms mats. Control by hand-pulling or hoeing and mulching. Edible
				
<b>Shepherd's purse</b> ( <i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i> ) Has triangular, purse shaped seedpods. Spreads by seed (more than 30,000 per plant). Easily hand-pulled when young. Edible/Medicinal uses.	<b>Fleabane</b> ( <i>Erigeron annuus</i> ) Member of the aster family and is a native wildflower. This is a good example of a "plant growing out of place" as it can spread aggressively by re-seeding.	<b>Henbit and Deadnettle</b> ( <i>Lamium aplexicaule</i> and <i>L. purpureum</i> ) Members of the mint family. Winter annuals. Reproduce by seed. Suppress with mulch; control by pulling and cultivation. Edible/Medicinal.	<b>Lambsquarter</b> ( <i>Chenopodium album</i> ) Rapid growing (average height of 3 feet) and adaptive. Each plant can produce 70,000 seeds. Control by cultivation and minimizing seed production and dispersal.	<b>Common chickweed</b> ( <i>Stellaria media</i> ) Winter annual. Forms a dense mat. Each plant produces thousands of seeds. Control by crop rotation and spring cultivation. Easy to pull. Edible/Medicinal.

For more information see <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/weeds>