

Weeds in the Garden

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Outdoor housework. That's what many people say to me when I suggest weeding is therapeutic. But weeding is an essential task if you want your garden to look its best.



The secret of weeding is to know your enemy. Recognising weed seedlings and demolishing them before they get established is the best way of dealing with them. If you haven't planted seeds, the flush of seedlings which appear overnight are unlikely to be prize plants. Drag the hoe through them on sight. Learn the growth pattern of weeds and be prepared for their arrival. Hairy

bittercress for example has up to seven lifecycles in a year and can be found in the garden virtually anytime. It usually comes into the garden from a plant bought at the garden centre. It comes into flower and sprays its explosive seedheads all round itself. Even though the parent dies after flowering, it leaves behind many progeny.

Weeds are of two main types, the perennial weeds which return if you just chop their tops off such as dandelions, or annual weeds such as groundsel which can be chopped off at ground level and left on the surface to die.

But what is a weed?

Some weeds are obvious such as dandelions but others can be quite attractive such as the little pink Herb Robert. What is the distinction between a weed and a wildflower? My definition of a weed is a plant which is unwanted in its situation and which will not readily go away. Some weeds were originally introduced as ornamental plants by plant hunters in the nineteenth century and



have found our climate and conditions highly favourable and having nothing to eat them in this country have thrived and become a pest. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam are two such introductions. The sycamore too is just too comfortable in our climate and has become a weed tree in most parts of the country. The seedling trees are much easier to get rid of when they are tiny.



How do we get rid of our weeds? There are many options depending on how thorough you want to be. A weedkiller containing glyphosphate which is absorbed by the plant and kills down to the roots is probably the best chemical control but the best way is to follow the root right into the soil

and dig it out.

Some weeds such as ground elder or mares tails are notoriously difficult to remove and often just have to be knocked back and tolerated.

Welcome weeds White Foxglove

Most are purple but by discarding these before they have set seed will leave a gene pool of white ones.

Chamomile



This rare native, now found only in a few sites in the wild deserves a place in any garden, whether as part of herbaceous planting, in the wild garden, or given a place of honour as a chamomile lawn.

Geranium pratense

A magnificent wildflower of meadows and verges with large blue/mauve flowers in summer

Variegated ground elder looks good in the garden centre but does tend to revert to the green one - then you have problems. Enjoy your gardening

Poem

THE FOG HAS MURDERED ME
By Jemma Doughty, aged 12

*Fog glazes over my eyes
I can't see you like I wish I could
Just a figure in the fog
That's all you are to me now.*

*Meaningless living
That's all life is now without you
I'm nothing
Just a zombie in the fog*

Allonby
by
Reece Moore
from
Silloth
Primary
School



Nurse Bee
by
Lorna De Mello
from
Holme St.
Cuthbert
Juniors



Sudoku Prize Competition

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Complete the grid so that every row, every column and every box contain all the digits from 1 to 9.

The winner of the May competition was Amanda Fearon from Silloth.

7	3	5	6					
	2	4		5				9
	8							
		6		3	5			
		7	2		9	1		
			7	1		3		
						8		
8				7		9	4	
					4	5	2	1

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