

Common Weeds

and

How to Control Them



Weed Control Basics:

1 – Prevent Seeding

Remove the plant before the flower goes to seed to reduce the number of new weeds you have in future years.

THIS IS KEY.

How to keep weeds from growing in the first place:

- **Use mulch:** Spread 3-4 inches of mulch to keep weeds out and moisture in.
- **Stay away from weed barrier fabric:** Barrier fabric causes soil compaction, leaves soil barren, and only temporarily prevents weeds from growing. Weeds can grow directly on weed fabric and can be difficult to remove.
- **Avoid soil compaction/disruption:** Compaction makes it hard for ornamental plants to grow and soil disruption allows for weeds to grow that have been waiting for air and sunlight to germinate.
- **Water with drip irrigation:** Drip irrigation avoids watering the surface of the mulch and soil where most weed seeds germinate.

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View our full *Common Weeds* class, as well as others classes, on our YouTube channel.

If you still find weeds after following the prevention guidelines, use the methods of control listed below:

2 – Hand Pulling/Digging

- In most cases, weeds can be removed by hand pulling or digging. Removing weeds is best done when soil is moist, so the plant is easier to remove. Weeds should be removed before they go to seed to prevent spreading. Be sure to remove the entire root systems to keep the weed from growing back.

Hand Pulling: This is for plants with a shallow root system that are generally able to be removed without tools.

Digging Out: This is for plants that have deep tap roots. Remove as much of the root as you can, preferably all of it, to prevent it from growing back. These plants are easier to pull when they are small.

3 – Herbicides (Broadleaf Weed Killer)

- If you have stubborn weeds that keep coming back, weeds that are difficult to hand pull (such as deep/extensive root systems or trees), or extra-large infestations of weeds, herbicides might be your best option. Broadleaf weed killer does not kill grass, but will kill other plants. Before using any herbicide, read the label to make sure it is meant for treating your target weed. Follow instructions carefully and take necessary precautions. Use as little herbicide as possible by spraying or applying directly to the weed, preferably before it flowers. **The label is the law.**

Control Methods:



Prevent Seeding



Hand Pull



Dig it Out



Broadleaf Weed Killer

Optimal Control Season:



Spring



Summer



Fall

Common Utah Weeds

Whitetop (Hoary Cress)

– *Lepidium draba*



A perennial that grows 1-2 feet tall. Small, four-petaled, white flowers grow in dense clusters above toothed leaves with seeds forming in heart-shaped pods. Because of the extensive root system, the best way to manage this weed is with an appropriately labeled herbicide before it flowers.

Field Bindweed

– *Convolvulus arvensis*



A creeping perennial that grows along the ground and up other plants. Flowers are funnel shaped and white to pink with arrowhead-shaped leaves. Because of the extensive root system, the best way to manage this weed is with an appropriately labeled herbicide, particularly in the fall.

Prickly Lettuce

– *Lactuca serriola*



A winter annual that has leaves with bristles along the middle of the underside in the fall and develops flowering stems the next summer with lots of small yellow flowers at the top. The stems and leaves contain milky sap. Annuals must grow from seed every year, so don't let it go to seed.

Goathead

– *Tribulus terrestris*



A summer annual that hugs the ground and has small leaves on branches that radiate out from a single root. Yellow flowers with five petals develop seeds with rigid spines that can puncture bike tires, feet, and go through shoes. Annuals must grow from seed every year, so don't let it go to seed.

Crabgrass

– *Digitaria sanguinalis*



A summer annual grass with blades that are light green, hairy, and can grow up to 6 inches long and ½ inch wide. It grows in clumps with lower leaves on the ground and upper leaves standing up. Annuals must grow from seed every year, so don't let it go to seed.

Dandelion

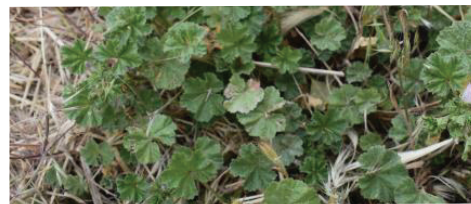
– *Taraxacum officinale*



An herbaceous perennial with lobed leaves at the base of the plant and a single yellow flower on the top of each stem with seeds that easily blow away in wind. The stem contains a milky sap. Flowers will still develop seeds after being picked, so make sure to put them in your garbage. Digging these out is best when they are small. If they are too persistent, using an appropriately labeled herbicide in the fall can help.

Common Mallow

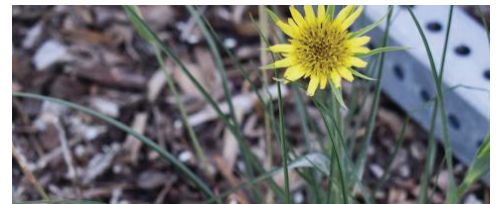
– *Malva neglecta*



A low-growing winter annual with round wavy leaves and a deep taproot. Flowers are small and white to lavender with soft seeds shaped like a wheel of cheese. Annuals must grow from seed every year, so don't let it go to seed.

Western Salsify

– *Tragopogon dubius*



An upright biennial (two-year life cycle) with long slender leaves and yellow (occasionally purple), star-shaped flowers at the top of each stem. Stems and leaves contain milky sap. Seed heads are round and fluffy with seeds that blow away in wind. It spreads by seed, so preventing seeding can reduce your future weeds.