

Weed Control in Vegetable Gardens

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Organic: Deep rototill (6"+), let weed seed sprout. When sprouts are 2"-3" tall – shallow rototill no more than 2" deep. Deeper rototilling will just bring up more weed seed, some of which is viable up to 80 years. Let weeds re-sprout and shallow rototill again. At this point you have gotten rid of most of the seed bed in the top 2" of the soil. Deeper rototilling or digging will bring up more weed seed.

Chemical: Kill weeds with a non-selective herbicide like glyphosate (the active ingredient in Round Up. Let the new weed come up. Spray and repeat when weeds are 3"+ tall and actively growing. The non-selective herbicide will destroy the seed bed in top 2" of soil. A non-selective chemical will kill everything it touches.

* Read and follow label.

Preen: A pre-emergent herbicide—kills seeds in soil before they emerge. You are able to use this with transplants. If planting seeds, wait until first 2 sets of true leaves (not to be confused with seed leaves) have developed. Preen (organic) combined with straw mulch* will control annual weeds. Start with a clean bed to apply Preen & mulch. Perennials develop from roots, not seed – dig out by the roots.

* Mulch—controls weeds and conserves moisture. Mulch can be tilled in in fall. Do Not use Certified, Weed-free hay- it contains herbicide.

Note: 4 layers of dampened newspapers under straw will work well to suppress weeds. Wet the newspaper to keep it from blowing away until you cover with straw.