

Why So Many Weeds?

Gardeners often ask why they have so many weeds. The answer is quite simple, we plant them!

Weed seeds can blow in, wash in with surface water or be introduced with the application of soils and organic matter, like manure. Birds and other wildlife also distribute weed seeds. However, the majority of weeds come from seed unsuspectingly planted by the gardener. In other words, weeds we allow to go to seed.

For example, a common pigweed plant, with its long reddish taproot, produces one hundred and seventeen thousand seeds per plant. That means just nine pigweed plants allowed to go to seed disseminate over one million seeds! And these seeds are

viable for forty years. Purslane, with its pinkish, fleshy stems and leaves, produces fifty-two thousand seeds per plant. Purslane seeds are viable for twenty-five years. And how about the common dandelion? It typically produces only fifteen thousand seeds per plant. So do not let weeds go to seed. A gardener who does not let weeds go to seed will have significantly fewer weeds each year.

Each time the garden is cultivated or tilled, a new crop of weed seeds are brought to the surface and are ready to germinate. To suppress weed germination, avoid unnecessary tilling. Application of a surface mulch, like grass clippings, also helps suppress weed seed germination. (MJF)

About Bromeliads

The bromeliad is a member of a large plant family that is native to the warmer climates of North and South America. Bromeliads grow in trees, attach themselves to rocks and live on the forest floor. They vary in size from one inch to 35-feet high. Bromeliads have many appealing qualities, but their foliage is generally the most attractive part of the plant. Some bromeliads have several bands or variegations on their leaves, which exhibit different color patterns. Along with their attractive foliage, bromeliads also develop beautiful flowering stalks that are vivid, unique and bold. Pineapple is an example of a fruiting bromeliad.

Bromeliads need strong light to grow well and produce flowers. You must have a very well-lit area in your home to grow these plants properly, although you can use artificial light. Most bromeliads have a natural reservoir that's formed by the leaves, which are arranged in a vase-like shape with

overlapping bases. This reservoir holds a large amount of water, so be careful not to over-water your bromeliad or you may rot the roots.

Because most bromeliads originated in the tropics, they need very warm temperatures to survive and grow well. Keep your room temperature at 70° F during the day and 55 to 60° F at night.

Bromeliads can be fertilized every three or four weeks with a half-strength mixture of all-purpose soluble fertilizer. This weak fertilizer can be placed directly in the receptacle cups of your bromeliad. Roots do not need to be fertilized as frequently. The soil should supply moisture to your plant without getting too soggy. The soil should also be porous enough to allow water to drain off easily and allow air to reach the roots.

You can force bromeliads to bloom easily by using a healthy, mature plant with a good root system. First, drain all water from the plant and place the



Bromeliad

plant inside a clear, airtight plastic bag with a large ripe apple. Ripe apples give off a gas called ethylene, which triggers the formation of flowers on bromeliads. After two to three days, remove the plant from the bag and replace the water you removed. Depending on the type of plant you have, flowering will begin in six to fourteen weeks. (MJF)

Herbal Festival

Join the Doole family and Pioneers Park Nature Center for a rededication of the renovated Louise Evans Doole Herb Garden

Saturday, Sept. 11
9:30 a.m.–3 p.m., \$5/person

Festivities include:

Betsy Williams
author, herb grower and floral designer from
'The Proper Season,' Andover, MA
Presentation:

"Developing Theme Gardens"
an Herbal Craft Workshop (materials fee extra)

also available:
Tours of the Renovated Herb Garden
Tasting Table
Mini-workshops
Informational booths

Presented in cooperation with the Nebraska Herbal Society. Call 441-7895 for more information.



The Top Ten Environmental Benefits of Forestry

1. Forestry is bringing back forests.

Until the 1920s, forests were often logged and abandoned. Now, across the country an average of 1.7 billion seedlings are planted annually. That translates into six seedlings planted for every tree harvested. In addition, billions of additional seedlings are regenerated naturally.

2. Forestry helps water quality.

Foresters carefully manage areas called watersheds (areas where we collect our drinking water) and riparian zones (land bordering rivers, streams and lakes). These are places where maintaining water quality is the primary concern for foresters. Forests actually help to clean water and get it ready for us to drink. The trees, soil and bacteria are all part of this process. Forest cover protects and nurtures the soils that are the key to water retention, filtering and quality.

3. Forestry offsets air pollution.

Foresters nurture forests, sometimes called "the gills of the planet." One mature tree absorbs approximately 13 pounds of carbon dioxide a year. For every ton of wood a forest grows, it removes 1.47 tons of carbon dioxide and replaces it with 1.07 tons of oxygen.

4. Forestry helps reduce catastrophic wildfires.

At the turn of the century, wildfires annually burned across 20 to 50 million acres of the country each year. Through education, prevention and control, the amount of wildfires has been reduced to about two to five million acres a year--a reduction of 90 percent. By marking and removing excess fuels, such as underbrush and some trees, foresters can modify

forests in order to make them more resilient to fire.

5. Forestry helps wildlife.

Foresters employ a variety of management techniques to benefit wildlife, including numerous endangered species. For example, thinning and harvesting create conditions that stimulate the growth of food sources for wildlife. Openings created by harvesting provide habitat for deer and a variety of songbirds. Thinning can be used to accelerate growth and development of older trees that are favored by owls and other species. In order to enhance salmon habitat, foresters also carry out strategic tree plantings and monitor forest health along streams in order to keep the water cool and reduce sediments.

6. Forestry provides great places to recreate.

Foresters manage forests that provide recreational benefits to communities. Forests are important areas for such recreationists as bird watchers, hikers, nature photographers, horseback riders, skiers, snowmobilers, and campers. And because foresters put water values high on their list of priorities, the rivers and lakes in forested areas provide such recreational opportunities as fishing, canoeing and rafting.

7. Forestry benefits urban environments.

Urban foresters manage forests and trees to benefit communities in many ways. Forests in urban areas reduce stormwater runoffs, improve air quality, and reduce energy consumption. For example, three well-placed mature trees around a house can cut air-conditioning costs by 10 to 50 percent.

8. Forestry provides renewable and energy-

efficient building products.

Foresters manage some forests for timber and produce a renewable resource because trees can be replanted. Other building materials, such as steel, iron, and copper, can be reused and recycled but not replaced. Wood is a renewable resource which, in addition to being recyclable, can be produced anew for generations to come on sustainable managed forest lands. Recycling and processing wood products also requires much less energy than does the processing of many other non-renewable materials.

9. Forestry helps family forests stay intact.

Foresters help family forestland owners, who own 54 percent of all the forests in the US, understand the benefits of managing their forests in an environmentally friendly manner. Better management of private forests means that those forests will remain healthy and productive. Many endangered species spent at least part of their time on private land, more than 80 percent of our country's total precipitation falls first on private lands and 70 percent of eastern watersheds run through private lands.

10. Forestry is good for soils.

Foresters and natural resource managers are dependent on forest soils for growing and managing forests and, to a large extent, forest soils are dependent on resource professionals and managers. Forester's success in growing forests and producing forest products is dependent on their ability to understand soil properties and to then match species with soils and to prescribe activities that not only promote forest growth but also enhance and protect soil productivity and prevent soil erosion.

From the Society of American Foresters. (MJF)

Garden Guide

Things to do this month

Check on water needs of hanging baskets daily in the summer. Wind and sun dry them much more quickly than other containers.

Clean up fallen rose and peony leaves. They can harbor disease and insect pests over the winter if allowed to remain on the ground.

Mound soil over the lateral or brace roots of corn stalks for extra support against strong winds.

Pick summer squash and zucchini every day or two to keep the plants producing.

Remove old vegetable plants which have stopped producing to eliminate a shelter for insects and disease organisms.

Water the garden early in the day so plants can absorb the moisture before the hot sun dries the soil. Early watering also insures that the foliage dries before night. Wet foliage at night increases susceptibility to fungus diseases.

Many herbs self-sow if the flowers are not removed. Dill produce seeds that fall around the parent plant and come up as volunteers the following spring.

To reduce the number of pests on your fruit tree for the coming year, pick up and destroy all fallen fruit.

Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is used by many gardeners to protect cole crops from chewing caterpillars.

White flies are attracted to yellow, so use yellow sticky boards to reduce their populations.

Every weed that produces seed means more trouble next year. Control weeds before they go to seed.

Do not add weeds with mature seed heads to the compost pile. Many weed seeds can remain viable and germinate next year when the compost is used. (MJF)