

Why So Many Weeds?

Mary Jane Frogge
Extension Associate

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 amendments, like manure. Birds and other wildlife also distribute weed seeds. However, the majority of weeds come from weeds we allow to go to seed.

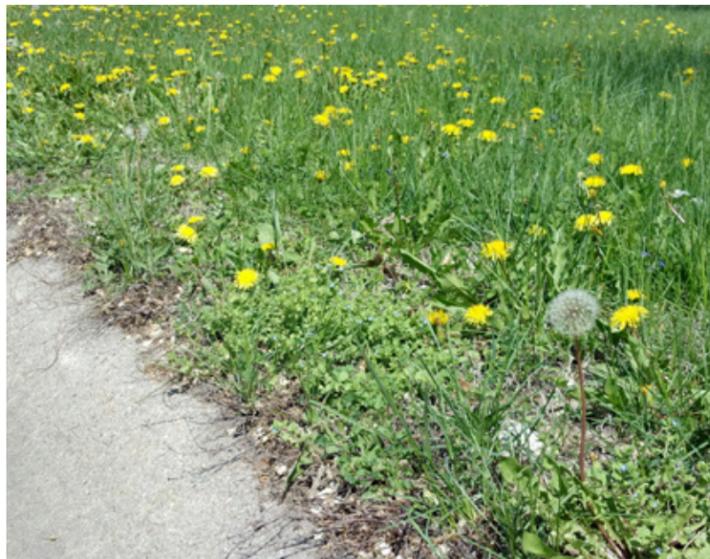
If your lawn is weak or has thin areas, it cannot out compete weeds. You need to take steps to make your lawn more vigorous and mow at a taller mowing height.

A common pigweed plant, with its long reddish taproot, produces 35,000 seeds per plant. Pokeweed seeds can remain viable in the seed bank for up to 40 years. Dandelion typically produces 15,000 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 mulch, like grass clippings, also helps suppress weed seed germination. Pre-emergent used in early May will help control annual weeds in the lawn and perennial beds.



Dandelion is a common weed in lawns, typically producing 15,000 seeds per plant.



Weeds allowed to go to seed in gardens add to the seed bank in soil.



GARDEN GUIDE

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

Mary Jane Frogge, Extension Associate

Fall watering is important for trees and shrubs. Continue to water until the soil freezes.

Dig and bring in cannas, dahlias and gladiolus. Dry, clean and store in a cool location free from frost.

Pick bagworms from evergreen shrubs. This will eliminate the spring hatch from over-wintered eggs.

Remove leaves from lawn to reduce lawn problems. Compost or shred and use them for mulch.

Plant spring flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils and crocus.

Cut down stems and foliage of herbaceous perennials after two or three hard frosts and when leaves begin to brown.

After several hard frosts add mulch to your perennial flower garden. A 1-inch layer of straw or chopped leaves will help conserve soil moisture and protect the root system.

When deciding on new trees or shrubs to plant around your home, remember to select varieties that will fit the location when they are at their mature height. This will greatly reduce pruning and other maintenance in the future.

Fall is the time to control broadleaf weeds in the lawn, such as white clover, dandelion and ground ivy.

Make a note of any particularly productive or unsatisfactory varieties of vegetables you planted this year. Such information can be very useful when planning next year's garden.

Remove any diseased or insect infested plant material from your garden, it may harbor over-wintering stages of disease or insect pests. If you leave this plant material in your garden, you are leaving diseases and insects which will begin to reproduce again next spring and add to next year's pest problem.

Fall is an excellent time for taking soil samples in your lawn and garden. Soil tests will measure the pH of the soil, organic matter content and the levels of some of the major elements required for plant growth, such as phosphorus and potassium.

Cure pumpkins, butternut and hubbard squash at temperatures between 70–80°F for two or three weeks immediately after harvest. After curing, store them in a dry place at 55–60°F.

Disaster Preparedness for Families

Jaci Foged
Extension Educator

Remember back in 1997 when Halloween was canceled in locations in eastern Nebraska due to a fall snowstorm?

Canceling Halloween may not have been a true “disaster” as much for the adults as it was for the children who look forward to an evening of trick-or-treating. The real disaster that weekend occurred when tree branches (which still had most of their leaves) became heavy with ice and snow and snapped during the night. This caused further damage to property and power outages throughout Lincoln for up to eight days.

Do you have a plan for your home in case something like this would happen again? What would you do if you had no power for eight days? How would you prepare food? How would you keep your children warm?

I know the value of being prepared whether it be for taking a test, teaching a class or packing for a vacation. I make lists, check them twice and am packed and ready to go a minimum of two days in advance. Thank goodness I packed my hospital bag six weeks before my due date as I went into labor five weeks early!

Why should it be any different when it comes to being

prepared for an emergency?

Our job as parents is to ensure the safety and well-being of our children. We can do this by putting a plan in place and collecting basic necessities for our family members, including our pets.

I have some easy steps to help prepare your family for a disaster. Remember, a disaster could be one of many (snowstorm, fire, tornado, earthquake, flood, etc.).

Create an Emergency Kit

Create an emergency kit with supplies for at least 72 hours for each person and pet in your home. Be sure to include children in packing. The kit should be convenient and portable.

- Water = one gallon per person per day.
- Three day supply of non-perishable food and a can opener — think of food which does not need cooked.
- A hand crank, battery powered NOAA weather radio with tone alerts and extra batteries.
- A flashlight and extra batteries.
- Cell phone charger. Consider buying an external battery for cell phones.
- First aid kit.
- Basic needs such as clothing, personal items, prescription

- medicine, contacts or glasses, toys, etc.
- Emergency blankets.
- Work gloves.
- Copies of your vital records, phone numbers and address book.

Practice Family Drills

Those of us with little kids should be practicing family drills so your children and you feel confident about what to do. My suggestion would be to practice on the first day of each season — or more often.

Walk your child through what to do in case of an emergency. How do you get outside (doors, windows and other exits), where do you meet, who can you call, etc. Actively participating in a drill will make it easier for your child to remember in the event of an emergency.

Follow the drill with a

BUILD A KIT

Include enough food, water, and medical supplies for your needs in your emergency kit to last for at least 72 hours.

READY.GOV/MYPLAN

marriage certificates, passports, insurance information, etc.).

After a Disaster

It is a good idea to know how to support our young children after a disaster as well. For more information on how to help preschoolers manage their emotions after a disaster, read NebGuide “How to Help Preschoolers Manage Their Emotions After a Disaster” (G2261) available at the Extension office or online at <http://extensionpublications.unl.edu/assets/pdf/g2261.pdf>

Additional resources:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency’s “Coping with Disaster” online at www.fema.gov/coping-disaster
- Ready Campaign’s “Helping Children Cope” online at www.ready.gov/kids/parents/coping

Upcoming Learning Child Trainings

Nebraska Extension teaches several early childhood development classes for childcare providers. Listed are upcoming classes held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road (unless location otherwise noted). For additional information or to sign up, contact Jaci Foged at jfoged2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

Nutrition & Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Childcare (NAP SACC)

— Tuesday, Nov. 7 and Tuesday, Nov. 14, 12:30–3:30 p.m. (must attend both dates). Free. Register by Nov. 1 at <http://go.unl.edu/novnapsacc>