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**Quick Reference Pros & Cons to tackling weeds**

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| Method | | Pros | Cons |
| Mulches | Thickly layered newspaper | Free  Recycles a waste product  Easily available  Easy to transport  Adds organic matter to the soil | Breaks down quickly  Can look unsightly |
| Cardboard | As for newspaper, but lasts longer |  |
| Black plastic weed fabric/ woven landscape fabric | Reusable year on year  Easy to use & store  Can be covered with other materials and prevents them being incorporated into the soil (good for permanent paths) | Expensive (in large areas)  Adds to the plastic problem  Frayed edges can jam up strimmers |
| Compost | Made on the plot from kitchen waste and plot clippings, this provides a fabulous recycled product  Adds organic matter to the soil | Takes time to produce from scratch  Cost to buy |
| Manure | Recycles a waste product  Adds organic matter to the soil | Cost to buy  Difficult to find organic suppliers  May not be acceptable for some due to animal management |
| Shredded bark, Sawdust, Woodchips | Free (some sites)  Recycles a waste product  Lasts a long time  Looks attractive | Cost to buy  If incorporated into soil, material can ‘steal’ nitrogen through decomposition process |
| Straw, Hay, Grass clippings, Leaves, Comfrey | Recycles a waste product  Adds organic matter to the soil | Difficult to keep in place  Can harbour pests |
| Manual | Hand Weeding | Lo-technology, only need a hand fork  Can tackle perennial problems individually  Most effective at long term solution | Labour intensive |
| Hand Hoeing | Good for tackling annual weeds | Risk of breaking up roots of pernicious weeds |
| Rotovating | Effective at deeply turning compacted soil | Cost to hire  Noisy, petrol machine  Breaks up roots of pernicious weeds |
| Strimming / Mowing | Useful for keeping grass paths under control  Can help clear a very overgrown space | Cost to buy/ hire  Petrol versions noisy, petrol |
| Thermal | Flame gun | Effective at spot treating perennial weeds | Cost to hire  Noisy, petrol machine |
| Boiling water | Effective at spot treating perennial weeds | Need a method to heat water on site (camping stove) |
| Growing Cover | Green Manures | Adds organic matter and / or nitrogen  Provides natural environment for microorganisms  Often attract beneficial insects  Looks attractive | Small cost  Germination issues |
| Crops | Provides natural environment for microorganisms  Produces interesting food | Small cost  More labour |

Top tips for keeping the plot mostly weed free:

* Focus on cultivating ONE bed at a time. There is no need to dig over the whole plot! It is easy to get excited with plans for dozens of different beds, but try and be realistic about how much time you have to devote to the plot. You can easily grown more than one type of vegetable in the same bed; in fact this is a useful strategy to promote diversity and prevent disease for your crops.
* Don’t do too much in one go. If you spend an entire day trying to tackle weeds, you will come away feeling disheartened and sore! Take on a small area and enjoy it. Why not invite friends along for some added muscle if you’re impatient to clear more space.
* Address perennial problems as soon as you see them. Pulling up a dandelion seedling is much easier than digging out a well-rooted mature plant.
* Where you have perennial or pernicious plants growing through paving or other hard standing areas, you can utilise heat to help you. Boiling water poured on the offending weed
* Once you’ve cleared a space, keep it clear. That way you only have to graft once. Mulch, cover, plant, whatever method suits you.
* Learn to love your weeds. Keep an area for wildlife – they will help pollinate your crops and help you fight off plant pests. Many plants we consider weeds are also delicious to eat: nettle, dandelion, chickweed, purslane, so don’t dismiss them entirely.
* Find what works for you. Chat with other gardeners and of course, ask us at BHOGG!