

## Garden Pests and Problems: Weeds

A weed is simply a “plant that is growing in the wrong place.” That can be a problem if that “place” is your garden! Weeds are not good for your garden plants because they take up water and soil nutrients that your garden plants could use to grow. Weeds also crowd and shade your garden plants so that they do not grow as well as they could. Weeds can take over your garden. If they are allowed to make seeds, the result is MORE weeds. Here are some steps you can take to keep weeds from becoming a problem.



- **Mulch** your garden. This means to spread wood chips, straw, or pine needles on top of the soil. Mulching will help keep weeds from growing, and those that get through the mulch are much easier to pull out since the mulch keeps the ground moist.
- If you don't mulch, keep weeds down by **hoeing or pulling** them up. It's easiest to remove weeds a day or two after it rains, while the soil is still soft. Be careful not to harm your garden plants by hoeing too close or pulling up too much soil near them.

If you have a **compost** pile, add your weeds to it. This lets you recycle the weeds and get back the nutrients they have taken from the soil. But make sure they have not made seeds or your compost will be full of weed seeds!

Take a walk through your garden looking for weeds. How many different types of weeds did you find in your garden? \_\_\_\_\_