

# **Weeds**

crabgrass

creeping Charlie

henbit and red deadnettle

honeyvine milkweed

nutgrass

pigweed

plantain

poison ivy

pokeweed

smartweed

yellow wood sorrel

One person's weed may be another person's wild flower, so first decide how you feel about the plant in your own yard or garden. Then, learn more about the plants you want to reduce or eliminate to determine how and when it is best controlled. Primary, is to first determine if the plant is an annual or perennial and if the plant is a grass or broadleaf. These will in large part determine how the plant can be controlled and where.

Annual weeds grow from seed each year and die at the end of the season usually by midsummer or are killed by frost (note the special case of winter annuals below). Perennial weeds on the other hand will come back year after year and often spread above ground by stems that root or below ground by rhizomes.

Broadleaf weeds are weeds that are botanically classified as dicots such as dandelions, plantain or red root pigweed. Grassy weeds are monocots with strap-like leaves and include crabgrass, quackgrass and Bermudagrass. Nutsedge looks grass-like but is actually a sedge. It is a common weed in lawn.



**dense unsightly patch**



**young crab grass seedling with new side  
branch ready to shoot out**

## crabgrass

- Warm season annual grass that overwinters as seeds
- There are three crabgrass species commonly found as weeds in lawns - hairy crabgrass (*Digitaria sanguinalis*), southern crabgrass (*Digitaria ciliaris*) and smooth crabgrass (*Digitaria ischaemum*).
- All three species are pale green, have a prostrate or ascending growth habit, and have flat 5-10 mm wide blades
- Forms dense, unsightly patches that smother desirable turf grasses
- Plants can produce seeds at mowing heights as low as ¼ inch
- Germination occurs when soil temperature consistently reach 55 degrees





leaves opposite, round to kidney-shaped with rounded teeth

small, bluish-purple,  
funnel-shaped flowers



## creeping Charlie

Other common names: ground ivy, gill-over-the-ground, haymaids

- European perennial evergreen, naturalized in North America
- One of the first plants to bloom in spring
- Mint odor when pulled
- Leaves opposite, round to kidney-shaped with rounded teeth
- Small, bluish-purple, funnel-shaped flowers
- Spreads by seeds & creeping stems that can root wherever they touch the ground
- Member of the mint family & has very fine hair all over & has a square creeping stem



**pink/purple flowers appear in whorls in the leaf axis of upper leaves**



**circular or rounded leaves with rounded teeth**

## henbit

- Annual winter weed that germinates in the fall & winter & grows actively in spring
- Tolerant of sun or shade, heat or cold (6-16"); henbit & deadnettle are often confused
- Circular or rounded leaves with rounded teeth on the leaf margin
- In the Mint family has square stems with opposite leaves
- Pink/purple flowers appear in whorls in the leaf axis of upper leaves
- Can grow from small pieces of stem, so chopping plant only helps it spread; also grows well from seed
- In cultivated areas that get tilled regularly, can form large seas of pink in spring





opposite, smooth leaves are heart-shaped



seed pod



## honeyvine milkweed

Other common names: climbing milkweed, honeyvine, sandvine, bluevine

- Native, perennial broadleaf
- Opposite, smooth leaves are heart-shaped
- Often confused with morning glories & bindweed, although the latter have alternate leaves
- Fruit, angle-shaped pods resembling those of *Asclepias*





**popcorn kernel-sized tubers**

## nutgrass

Other common names: nutsedge, yellow nutsedge, yellow nutgrass

- Perennial; reproduction is primarily by popcorn kernel-sized tubers that can remain viable for 10 or more years, also produces seeds
- Sedge (*i.e.*, stem that is triangular in cross section, not round as in rushes)
- Often classed among world's worst weeds
- Specific herbicides are required for control
- Hand pulling young weeds can help but must be done repeatedly because tubers and nutlets often break off and remain underground
- One tuber can produce almost 150 tubers in 14 weeks





**leaves are alternate & ovate**



**greenish flowers terminal panicles**

## **pigweed**

Other common names: redroot pigweed, rough pigweed, careless weed

- Native, summer annual broadleaf
- Toxic to pigs and cows
- Leaves are alternate, ovate, sometimes purple underneath
- Flowers are small, green and on terminal panicles
- Prolific seeder associated with late summer allergies





**leaves in a basal rosette, lanceolate,  
with parallel veins**



**flower stalk has oblong grouping  
of many small flowers**

## plantain

Other common names: English plantain, buckhorn plantain, lanceleaf plantain, ribgrass, ribwort, pig's ears

- Introduced; rosette-forming perennial herb
- Leaves in a basal rosette, lanceolate, with parallel veins & long, tapering petioles (leaf stalks)
- Flower stalk has oblong grouping of many small flowers, each with pointed bract
- This is one of the few "dicot" plants that has leaves with parallel veins





**alternate, compound,  
with 3 leaflets**



## **poison ivy**

- Poison-ivy is an American native perennial that has a range extending from Canada to South America.
- Propagates by several means, including seed, extensive rootstock & stems that are capable of rooting where contacting soil surface (layering)
- Appears as vine (prostrate or climbing) or upright bush
- Leaves alternate, compound, with 3 leaflets that are variable in size & shape
- Causes dermatitis ("leaves of three, let it be")





leaves are simple, alternate,  
ovate-lanceolate



## **pokeweed**

Other common names: poke, pokebush, pokeberry, pokeroot, inkberry

- Non-woody (herbaceous) perennial that grows 3 to 10 feet tall
- All parts of the mature plant are poisonous, the first young shoots that emerge in spring are edible when cooked
- Leaves are simple, alternate, ovate-lanceolate, & smooth
- Taproots look something like potatoes, with brown skin & white inner flesh
- Each berry contains ten shiny black seeds neatly arranged in a ring





**greenish pink flowers are delicate in nature**

## smartweed

Other common names: prostrate knotweed, pinweed

- A terrestrial or aquatic perennial
- Leaves are alternate, ovate, sharply pointed on petioles
- Greenish pink flowers are delicate in nature
- Papery sheath at each node gives the stems a knotted or swollen appearance
- Forms flat mat (2-3' diameter) on slender wiry stems that emerge from a tap root





**leaves are alternate, trifoliate with heart-shaped leaflets**



## **yellow wood sorrel**

- Native perennial
- Floppy umbels of yellow flowers emerge from leaf axils on slightly pubescent stalks
- Plant spreads by means of mechanical ejection of seeds from the seed capsules; each capsule splits into 5 sections
- Leaves are alternate, trifoliate with heart-shaped leaflets
- Wild edible with a pleasant sour taste (also called sourgrass)