



# Gardening Naturally

BY GARY LOCHTE

Thus far, 2015 has been a time of good rains in South and Central Texas. At the ranch, my pastures look better and greener than they have in several years. Median temperatures have been mild and generally pleasant.

Of course, if you are like me, the abundant rainfall has also caused intense weed growth.....I see more weeds than I remember seeing in a long time! Tall, plump, and gangly weeds have sprung up everywhere.

In your yard, the best weed control is accomplished by way of your lawnmower. Providing you regularly mow the weeds prior to flower set, you can do an excellent job of controlling weeds. Because you are mowing prior to the weeds going to bloom then to seed, you are also minimizing next year's weed proliferation. The weed-mulch created by your lawn mower will feed your lawn.

Weeds in gardens and flower beds are a different story and require an entirely different strategy. While picking and pulling is effective, due to the sheer abundance of weed growth, you will need to consider other weed control alternatives.

The alternative of choice is spraying. But the big questions is, "What works effectively to kill the weeds?" But more important, "What works to effectively but safely kill those pesky weeds?"

By reading my previous articles, you know that I avoid chemical fertilizers and herbicides. I will not use petro-chemical based products on my soils. But, I must admit that I

am tempted to temporarily use some of these poisons just because the weeds are so horrific!

Fortunately I do have a weed-killing remedy that works well, is safe for people, pets, and livestock, and is very economical. To kill weeds effectively just follow this method described below.

In a pump sprayer, combine the following ingredients and stir well:

**\*1 gallon of 10% White Pickling Vinegar ( found at any good grocery store )**

**1 cup of Epsom Salts**

**1 oz. of Orange Oil or di-limonene**

**1 tsp of liquid dish soap**

**1 tbl of Molasses ( optional )**

**Very important! Do not dilute with water**

\*20% Agricultural Vinegar may be used in lieu of the pickling vinegar, and it will kill the vegetation faster than the 10%, but costs at least four times as much.

To apply, simply spray the vegetation you wish to eliminate. Spraying should be done in the morning sun. You may need to repeat the process 1 or 2 additional times to eradicate undesirable vegetation.

Be careful what you spray because this mixture is indiscriminate. Whatever green and leafy plants you spray will yellow and die.

However, there is a reprieve for woody plants and tree trunks as this vinegar mixture does not negatively affect these plants in the least.

A side note.....there are no harmful residues or harmful side- effects to your soils. In fact, the vinegar nourishes the soil as does the orange oil. The molasses is nutrient dense and acts to gently re-mineralize the soil. Also, the orange oil acts to repel bugs!

