Gardening Basics

LESSON 8:
INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT - WEEDS

Types of Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Cultural Control

An ounce of prevention...

- Remember that cultural control is manipulating the environment to be less favourable for your weeds to grow
- Sow fast growing varieties that will be naturally more competitive, outgrowing weed species
- Practice crop rotations (this goes for ALL pests, not just weeds!)
- When seeding, plant seeds as close as spacing will allow to prevent having large amounts of bare soil for weeds to germinate

Physical Control

Most gardeners practice some form of physical weed control in their gardens.

- Physical control can also encompass mechanical, which is the act of cultivating or using mechanical means to control weeds (think, tillage, flame weeders, etc.)
- One of the best types of physical control for weeds is using mulch – this can be organic such as straw or leaves, or inorganic, such as landscape fabric or plastic
- Also included in physical control is hand pulling or removing weeds using a hoe. This allows for control around desired plants while removing problem weeds in the garden

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Biological Control

Biological control for weeds is one of the few IPM strategies that is not effective to the home gardener.

- Biological control involves introducing a living organism to control a pest
- While biological control can sometimes work well in rangelands, it is not effective in gardens, and it is not advised to introduce living organisms in the hopes of controlling home weeds
- When dealing with weeds in the garden, it is best to look to other forms of control!

Chemical Control

As mentioned in lesson seven, chemical control should be used as a last resort. There are instances where chemical control of weeds may be necessary in the home garden and there are varying degrees of the type of chemicals used.

- Chemical control of weeds is an effective tool, but it is important to understand how they work and what is the best product to use for your situation
- One of the main problems involved in chemical control is the development of *resistance*, or when a chemical is no longer effective on a weed or pest due to overuse
- It is important to read and follow the label on any herbicide being used – labels will have directions on how to apply the product safely for both the user and the environment, and how to avoid developing resistance