

Corn Gluten Meal—A safe herbicide



When tackling weed problems in your lawn, it is tempting to buy toxic chemicals to handle the problem quickly. However, with a little patience the weed problems can be tackled safely with no risk to pets and children.

Corn Gluten Meal (CGM) is a by-product of corn milling. When used in lawn care, the CGM acts as a pre-emergent herbicide, preventing weed seeds from germinating. Among the weeds it can control are dandelions and crab grass. As an added bonus it also is 10% nitrogen, feeding your lawn a gentle application of nitrogen.

There are commercially available “weed’n’feed” type products on the market but finding them may require some searching. Since the CGM is an ingredient in animal feed it is possible to buy this product at animal feed stores when it can be found as the main ingredient in some hog feed and dog foods.

It is recommended to apply CGM in the spring and in the fall at a rate of 20lb/1000 sq ft. The effects are not expected to be immediate, but gradual, as the CGM is preventing new weeds not attacking existing weeds.

Full lawn care benefits are expected in around the fourth season of application; the environmental benefits are immediate.


WEEDS

Reduce weeds in flower beds and vegetable gardens by using mulch.

Mulching means adding a layer of material to the soil. This is usually done in the spring and the fall. Mulching has many benefits including reducing evaporation, improving soil quality and impeding weed growth.

The following list includes some of the materials that can be used as a mulch. It may be of benefit to “mix and match”. Be careful not to let the mulch touch stems of very young plants.

- Compost
- Coffee grounds
- Chopped leaves
- Tea leaves
- Grass clippings
- Pine needles*
- Wood chips (not poplar or aspen) *favoured by acid-loving plants
- Shredded newspaper



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Natural Gardening Solutions

Keep in mind that weeds and pests exist in nature to serve a purpose and fighting them can feel like you are indeed tackling Mother Nature single-handedly.

Weeds can provide shade and reduce evaporation, or draw nutrients into the soil. Pests can attract birds or provide soil aeration.

The following tips and recipes are designed to help you *manage* your garden—not to *conquer* it.

Happy Gardening!

Insecticidal Soap

- 2 tsp liquid Ivory soap
- 4 litres water
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil

Mix together and spray on leaves of infected plants or directly on soft bodied insects, such as aphids and caterpillars. It may need to be re-applied every several days.

Commercial insecticidal soap is environmentally-friendly and available in many stores. This homemade version is easy to mix up with common household ingredients.

Weed Killer

- 4 cups white vinegar
- 1/4 cup table salt
- 2 tsp dish soap

Mix together and spray directly on the weeds. It is most effective if used on a warm or hot day.

CAUTION: this will kill all the plants it touches so use care to apply only to the weeds. Use an old milk jug as a funnel.



More than one application may be necessary.

ANTS

Outdoors

Ants in small numbers provide soil aeration. However if you have an anthill in your garden you may find the following suggestions worth a try.

Pour the following over the anthill:

- Boiling water; Soapy water; or Salted water
- Water and citrus peelings, blended
- Coke (this product specifically), 2 or 3 bottles
- Manure tea

Spread the following around the anthill:

- Red pepper (not cayenne)
- Eggshells
- Bone meal or blood meal
- Diatomaceous earth
- Cinnamon
- Instant grits/oatmeal/potato flakes
- Wood ash
- Talcum powder
- Coffee grounds
- Tomato leaves
- Peppermint leaves
- Birdseed (the birds will also eat the ants)

Plant mint family plants

Indoors

Garden ants in your home are a nuisance but not a large threat. Determine what is drawing the ants in and remove it.

To prevent ants from entering your home, create barriers with the following:

- Citrus or cucumber peelings
- Talcum powder
- Chalk
- Red chili pepper/paprika/ dried peppermint or white pepper
- Borax (careful around pets)
- Aftershave
- Petroleum jelly
- Laundry or dishwasher detergent

To repel ants from inside your cupboards, try placing the following items in each cupboard:

- Citrus peels
- Talcum powder
- Chalk
- Camphor/ sage/ bay leaves
- Cinnamon/ cloves
- Mint teabags



DEER

Place any of the following around your property as deer deterrents:

- netting
- noisemakers
- light-catchers (try old CDs)
- deodorant soap
- scented fabric sheets



Motion-sensor sprinklers can also deter deer.

SLUGS

Handpicking slugs and stomping or drowning them is the most basic tactic in controlling their damage (although this doesn't appeal to everyone).

Baiting can be done with dog food, garden debris or any number of other lures.

If this isn't for you, try the following:

Beer—bury a container half-filled with beer in the ground. Attracted by the yeast, slugs enter the beer where the alcohol kills them.



Sugar Shack—fill a container with 1 teaspoon each of: jam, sugar and lemon juice. Place the container in the ground so that the slugs can easily climb in. The sugar attracts the slugs and the lemon juice kills them.



Sand or Ash Barriers—form a barrier several inches wide around the plants you'd like to protect from slug damage. The abrasive sand/ash will dehydrate the slug.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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