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“Your Home Turf Advantage”

— DIY EXPERIMENTS SERIES —

“Alternate Ways To Remove Weeds From Your Gravel Driveway”



At Scott’s Quality Lawn Care, we’re all about *“educating our clients”* ... We want to do what we can to help YOU so that, if desired, you can become more knowledgeable and proficient with your lawn care habits. It’s always been a passion of ours to help people take great pride in the beautiful yards and lawns they can create for themselves.

Of course, we have our small part in that... We can surely provide you with a wide range of excellent lawn care services. We’ve been pleased to service our ever-growing client base for many years already. Some of you have been with us since our small humble beginnings back in 2010. As you know, we take client service very seriously, and our clients have told us that that they appreciate us being helpful beyond just merely offering and selling them our services. They are learning more as we are learning more. We count it a privilege to share our experience and knowledge with our valued clients. **With that in mind, we’re pleased to offer you a new series of highly informative lawn care articles... our “DIY (Do It Yourself) Experiments Series”**

I guess it’s fair to say, this series of DIY EXPERIMENTS articles are for those who may have some *spare time on their hands*... If you prefer, we of course, can still look after your lawn care needs as we have been. But sometimes, for various reasons, some clients even prefer doing the odd thing or two by themselves... For some of us, we actually don’t mind *getting our hands dirty* in lawn care or garden care – It’s a bit like *therapy* for us, I guess we could say. I’m one of those people I guess, too... I love being outside working in my yard.

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These series of articles are essentially for those homeowners who want to take full responsibility and try something different and *on their own*... These are not by any means “*magic-do-this-once*” type of methods that our company is recommending as though they are additional services or products we’re offering our clients. **It’s simply some free advice we’re offering (which is freely available online everywhere, too). We offer it as a courtesy for those whose weed-killing needs are small in scale but may not warrant booking us for a couple Roundup weed control applications.**

LIABILITY WAIVER —

***** These are non-guaranteed alternate approaches to addressing weed problems on a minor or small scale, NOT for major weed outbreaks or infestations. As such, Scotts Quality Lawn Care assumes no liability for any information presented in these articles.** In fact, most of this info is gleaned from online sources and as much from some of our own personal experiences and experiments, too. If you’re internet-savvy, it’s likely that you’ve already seen some of these suggestions from people online or perhaps from neighbours who have tried some of these things which have perhaps worked to whatever degree for them.

PLUS... Depending upon what you’re doing, these may be risky with regards to any adjacent lawn or plants that you desire to keep alive, shall we say... So, if I haven’t scared you away, then please READ ON...

The topic for this DIY article is —

“Alternate Ways To Remove Weeds From Your Gravel Driveway”

Firstly, let me reiterate and put in bold print for you... **THESE ARE NOT METHODS WE CAN GUARANTEE WILL WORK FOR EVERYONE NOR GARNER THE EXACT SAME RESULTS ALWAYS. YOUR RESULTS MIGHT BE SIMILAR OR BETTER... OR THEY COULD EVEN BE MUCH WORSE AND DETRIMENTAL TO NEARBY LAWN OR PLANTS, ETC., IF YOU’RE NOT CAREFUL IN YOUR EXPERIMENTING.**

So **IT’S ENTIRELY UP TO YOU** as to whether experimenting with these DIY approaches is worth the potential risk. I would suspect that many a homeowner welcomes the challenge and the pride that can come along with that if their experiments are, indeed, a success. I know for myself personally, that some of these DIY solutions can work and quite well, too. I hope any who may try these out for themselves may experience some great results!

HERE’S THE IDEAL APPLICATION FOR THIS PARTICULAR DIY EXPERIMENT —

I’ll use myself as an example...

FOR ME - I live on a small acreage out of town and I have a very short gravel driveway, as well as a few gravel walkways throughout my front yard... So this particular article is one that suits my own circumstances perfectly. I don’t have enough gravel areas with weeds to warrant the expense of a Roundup application. It’s something I can easily look after myself and may only require doing just this one time this year.

FOR YOU - If you likewise have a small gravel driveway or a small gravel parking pad, perhaps for an RV or utility trailer, or any gravel walkways, this “MAY” be something you can consider doing yourself, too. I would only say this “IF” those particular areas are rather small areas. If they’re larger gravel areas or bare land that are prone to weeds, then of course, do consider our ROUNDUP SPRAY SERVICE. It would be well worth it and save you the time and labour compared to doing it yourself.

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*** **Be mindful that Roundup will kill any and every weed or plant or grass, etc. that it is sprayed on.** It is *indiscriminate and non-selective* and as our Roundup clients know, it may need to be applied more than once depending upon how problematic or wide-spread your weed problem may be. However, **Roundup is NEVER to be used on lawns or where it might inadvertently make contact with any grass or plants, or flowers, or trees or shrubs, that you desire to keep alive.** It also will stay active within the soil for possibly over a year before all chemical traces of it may finally be gone.

So, if you're looking for a short-term weed killer for gravel or bare land areas, before you're perhaps yet planning to plant something or seed new grass in those same areas, this may NOT be the right solution for you. **Roundup is only for those wanting ongoing long-term killing of all vegetation in those areas.** [For example, a rather large or long gravel driveway or parking pad area... or perhaps an adjacent empty lot you own that is weed-infested and the City is getting after you to make it look better... or a neglected large area of your yard you want to first weed-kill and then subsequently cement or pave (but not plant anything there).]

So... let's get to it... **“Alternate Ways To Remove Weeds From Your Gravel Driveway”**
What follows are NOT methods that specify a certain *magic* procedure and if you follow the directions, it should work as directed... NO... These are only alternate DIY methods *you may experiment with* which may work very well for you, or they may not... That'll be up to you...

It's YOU that will be experimenting and trying possible variations as a *custom solution* that “*may*” work for you given your own unique requirements or particular weed problems.

* **Some of these suggestions are also ideal for those who may not want to use anything chemically-based.**

As mentioned, this article will offer some practical suggestions gleaned from online sources and what others have done.

Weeds!!! What a nuisance and annoyance they can be!

The *unwelcome usurper* always trying to take up residence where it doesn't belong, right?

As you know, Scott's Quality Lawn Care does provide an excellent Fertilizer & Weed Control spray program for lawns. But **it is ONLY for lawn areas. It's not meant for gravelled areas** as the herbicide component of the spray will indeed get rid of most broadleaf weeds but if they're NOT broadleaf weeds, then understandably, the fertilizer component is going to make them grow all the more... meaning that it is NOT the solution for gravel driveways, gravel parking areas, or gravel walkways, etc. As mentioned earlier, we can offer you Roundup for those areas which will be very effective.

But sometimes, our clients may have smaller gravel areas that get weeds, wherein ¹ *they can pick up a small spray bottle of Roundup and do it themselves* as per the manufacturer's instructions. Or, if they'd prefer a non-chemical option, ² *they can consider the alternate DIY methods we'll now mention below...* But even these alternates do have their Pros and Cons, as well.

Any of us who have gravel areas know that weeds will inevitably attempt to *make a home* in the midst of the gravel... Wonderful hey? NO, NOT AT ALL!

These weeds tend to be an *ultra-annoyance* and it's not just because they look unsightly popping up here and there. It's because these opportunistic weeds somehow manage to literally, *thrive* amidst the gravel and rocks.

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There's just enough soil between and of course below that gravel that they'll seed within and start growing like crazy. Combine that with the fact that they tend to spread their seeds and anchor their roots with such ease and it's easy to see why gravel weeds can be nefarious *plant intruders* that nobody wants.

Whether it's broadleaf weeds like dandelions or mere random grasses popping up in the tiniest of gaps between the gravel, they can quickly spread and take over your gravel driveway or walkways within a season. That is, if you don't do something about them sooner than later. And remember too, that if they're perennials, they'll continue to reappear each year unless you get rid of them once and for all.

It might literally be any of the following *usual suspects* that you're encountering... They love invading our gravel areas and each has its own unique bothersome characteristics —

Chickweed:

- An annual weed that forms dense, low mats.
- It produces small white flowers and spreads rapidly by seed.

Clover:

- Both white clover and red clover are perennial weeds with rounded leaflets.
- They spread through rhizomes and seeds.

Crabgrass:

- This grassy weed spreads aggressively via runners and seeds.
- It's a summer annual, so it normally dies off in winter.

Creeping Charlie:

- Also called ground ivy, this low-growing perennial weed has round, scalloped leaves.
- It spreads rapidly.

Dandelions:

- These pesky perennials have deeply tap-rooted plants with yellow flowers.
- They spread quickly via windborne seeds.

Moss:

- Dense patches of moss can grow between gravel driveway rocks.
- Moss lacks true roots and spreads via spores.
- It's indicative of a lot of moisture amidst your gravel or the soil beneath it.

Plantain:

- Broadleaf plantain and buckhorn plantain are two common perennial weeds with wide leaves.
- They spread by seeds.

This is by no means an exhaustive list but some of the more common weeds appearing in gravel. That being said, any plant's seeds can potentially blow into and sprout up in your driveway's gravel crevices, especially just random grasses. And some weeds can be rather invasive if left to mature and reappear perennially.

THE GOOD NEWS IS: Apart from what's been mentioned above for larger gravelled areas, via Roundup, there are plenty of ways to battle these weeds in some easy and affordable ways for smaller gravelled areas —

Let's consider these one by one... But firstly, let's back up the timeline a wee bit...

FIRST QUESTION — What if I haven't yet put down gravel for a driveway or some walkways? Is there anything I can do *preventatively* to stop weeds growing in my gravelled areas?

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- ✓ What is meant by that is... **To stop weeds from growing in gravel you can, indeed, put down a weed membrane or some landscaping weed-suppressant fabric on top of the ground before bringing in all those loads of gravel.** The hope is that this will smother any weeds underneath and stop them from growing through the gravel surface.

Does this really actually work? And, if so, for how long?

Putting down some landscape weed-suppressant fabric in a rock garden area to suppress weeds is one thing, but putting it under gravel isn't quite the same thing or as effective.

The Pros:

- Weed suppressant material is usually thick enough to stop weed growth before it begins by forming a barrier between the soil and the gravel.
- And yet it's thin enough to allow moisture to drain properly from the gravelled areas.
- It's purpose is to stop deep-rooting weeds seeding and growing up through the gravel.

The Cons:

- What's promised in marketing pitches and what is the reality are sometimes two very different things, as many of us have already experienced.
- Over time and perhaps sooner than later with heavy foot or vehicle traffic, the fabric is apt to become punctured by the gravel thereby allowing long-rooted weeds, like dandelions for example, to seed and grow through it anyway.
- Not only the weighty traffic above, but also the moisture and microbial activity will all do their part in eventually breaking down the integrity of just about any weed membrane or weed suppressant material. It may take a few years or it may happen even sooner... and you won't know until suddenly you've got a surprising number of weeds arising in the midst of your gravel... surprise... surprise!
- And of course, digging weeds out that are growing through weed suppressant material is almost impossible without further damaging the material.
- If you are thinking to rely on this as a method of weed control, you best be prepared to laboriously rake off the gravel and replace the landscape fabric every 2 to 3 years or as often as necessary.
- If that's simply too much work then resign yourself to at least regularly raking the gravel surface which can also help stop weeds from growing. That should disturb and pull out young shallow-rooting weeds and also weed seeds thereby hopefully preventing them from germinating.

- ✓ **A slight variation or alternative to the above would be using plastic sheeting as a weed suppressant.**

The Pros:

- Black plastic sheets can be laid down as a barrier between the soil and the gravel thereby cutting out the sunlight so that it can kill existing weeds and stops weeds germinating and growing up through the gravel.
- Plastic sheeting is cheap and easy to cut to shape with a knife or scissors.

The Cons:

- If you're using only white or clear plastic sheeting, it does not stop light getting through so you're not apt to kill many weeds until the ground underneath the plastic barrier has completely dried out and this could literally take months.
- Therefore, in the meantime, before it dries out, if the plastic gets pierced by the gravel (and it eventually will), the weeds will surely grow through it.
- Remember also that all colours of plastic sheeting, are impermeable to water, meaning rainwater can't escape into the ground and is likely to end up as a puddle on the surface or if the gravel path or gravel driveway slopes, will run to the lowest point possibly causing water-logging problems.

- Heavy foot or car traffic crushing the gravel onto the weed suppressant plastic will also poke holes in it and will thereby allow water to drain through the plastic letting weeds grow through.

So... will some kind of weed barrier underneath the gravel help? YES, UP TO A POINT but perhaps for not as long as you might think... Mine lasted only about 2 years and then the weeds started to arrive... So now for me, it's the other options that follow, which I've done some experimenting with. Some things worked well enough. Others not so much... But everyone's situation may be different.

Check these out... You may want to try some of them, or all of them, or even some combination of them to see what may work the best for you. But once again, I'll remind all of us - If your gravelled areas are large, just get a Roundup treatment to save you the time and labour. For larger gravel areas it's very cost-effective and ideal... But for only small gravelled areas, not as much. So then by all means, you have some possible options to experiment with to your heart's content, right?

*** A quick reminder again, too. If you're looking for a non-chemical herbicide alternative or a more natural means to get rid of weeds in your smaller gravelled areas you could surely consider these options —**

OPTION 1: No Magic Here... Manual Extraction - You Simply Pull Them Out By Hand

- ✓ If you're looking at a relatively small patch or not too many weeds in your gravel driveway or walkways, your best bet may be putting on a pair of gloves and then pulling your weeds out by hand.
 - If you've been doing this as soon as you see any appear, it'll make for less work.
 - If you wait and allow more of them to mature, it's going to take more regular effort, needless to say.
- ✓ If the depth of gravelled areas is only 3 inches or less, they'll unfortunately have an easier time of getting to the water and nutrients below compared to if it was 5 inches or more of gravel. But on the flip-side, their roots may also not be anchored as deeply, so they'll be easier to pull out roots and all, (unless you've allowed them to fully mature and reach well beyond the gravel surface to deep in the ground below). **The key thing is pull them out as soon as you see them appear... Don't wait till they're bigger and more deeply-rooted.**
 1. Be sure to grab the weed as low down as possible, at the surface of the gravel.
 2. Grip firmly and wiggle it a bit to loosen it if possible and then slowly pull the weed until you can feel it loosen enough so that you're able to pull up, hopefully, the entire root along with it, too.
 3. Don't fret if it snaps off – simply grab your garden trowel or garden claw tool, or weeding tool, and dig it out.
 4. If you don't remove the entire root, it's apt to grow right back pretty fast.
 5. Thankfully, many self-seeding annual weeds will only shallow-root in gravel, so these should be easier to remove. It's the perennial ones that if left to grow and mature, whose tap roots may be more difficult to fully get out.
 6. Discard the weeds, burn them in your firepit if you have one, but don't put them in your compost pile unless they're totally dried out and 100% dead... Otherwise they just might take root and grow there, which you don't want to have happen.

OPTION 2: Consider Applying Some Salt

- ✓ You may or may not be aware of this... Rock salt or even some household table salt (both being sodium chloride) can be an effective and natural non-toxic weed killer for tackling those weeds in your gravel areas. FYI, Epsom salts are not very effective as they'd more akin to the fertilizer side of things than herbicide side.
- ✓ Just as too much sodium isn't healthy for people, it's not great for plants either. High sodium levels disrupt the internal water balance of plant cells, creating a nutrient deficiency.

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It can take up to a week or more for a plant to fully absorb salt, and over this time, the salt's effects will start to burn the leaves. Its use can cause a weed to die back because the plant simply isn't getting the water and nutrients it needs.

- ✓ You'll have the best luck killing smaller weeds with salt; it's less effective with more mature or larger weeds.
- ✓ Simply sprinkle some salt on the gravel surrounding any visible weeds (as well as on the weeds, though it will likely fall off) and then, depending upon the weed type and maturity of it, within a matter of a few days to a week or more, you should see it wilting and dying.
- ✓ The ideal time to do so is after the morning dew as that will help the salt adhere better... Any light rain may help it to be more effective, too. But if it's a heavy rain, it'll simply wash it away, which is counter-productive. So be mindful that salt tends to stay where it's spread until it's leached away by rainwater or irrigation/sprinkler activity. Sodium ions do not break down easily, which means you better be sure there's no drainage issues wherein this salty water may find its way towards your healthy grass or other plants or flowers, causing them to potentially die off, as well.
- ✓ Alternatively, salt is water-soluble, so you can also dissolve salt with water and spray it onto any weeds or random grass or plant usurpers you hope to kill.
 - Online opinions vary as to the ideal salt to water ratios to use, so I'd say to start with the following and do your own experimenting.
 - Start your experiment with a fairly weak mixture of 1 part salt to 2 to 3 parts water.
 - Table salt in this case will dissolve more easily than coarse rock salt.
 - You can increase the amount of salt daily to 2 parts salt to 1 part water until the weeds are dying back a fair bit.
 - For this liquid spray approach, adding a little bit of dish soap as a surfactant to help it stick to the weed's leaves will help.
 - Plus adding a little white vinegar will increase its effectiveness, too. Feel free to experiment as different weed plants will handle this treatment in different ways.
 - Needless to say, if you're applying the salty liquid spray in an area where the long-term health of the soil is never going to be an issue for you, a much stronger mixture can be made such as a 3:1 ratio of salt to water.
 - This amount of salt will definitely affect the pH levels of the soil over time and may cause it to become sterile.
 - Under your gravel, if that's what it's always going to be, that won't be an issue.
- ✓ Either of the above salt methods can work quite well as the salt will gradually seep into the gravel and ground beneath it, where it was sprinkled or sprayed, preventing any weeds or (whatever kind of random grass or plants therein) from being able to grow there for a while. As mentioned, the weeds will absorb the salt, leaving them nutrient deficient, as well as dehydrate them essentially, and in high levels it will simply burn the leaves, commencing at the tip, and cause them to die back and affect the roots, too. You'll see the desiccation within a few days to a week depending how much salt you put on them.
- ✓ This method has long term results... If you use too much salt and it gets into the soil below the gravel, it can make it sterile so that nothing will grow there for possible years, which in this application... is fine.
 - Just be careful, as I've cautioned, to NOT get that salt onto any nearby grass or other plants as you don't want them to become collateral damage and die, too, nor to impact their soil.
 - If you inadvertently get some of this salt or salt spray onto other plants nearby, water them generously to flush out any saltwater that made it into the surrounding soil.

OPTION 3: DIY Weed Killer For Gravelled Areas

This is where some experimentation comes in...

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Any of the following component ingredients can of course be experimented with on their own. But if you use them together, you may get some better results. That's usually what most people end up doing... But it comes with some cautions, too.

Given that this may be the first time you're experimenting with any of the following, try it first on a small area or outcropping of weeds.

- ✓ I touched on this a little bit already... This can be made by mixing a couple tablespoons of dish soap with some white household vinegar (5% acetic acid) (1 gallon or so).
 - Horticultural vinegars contain higher concentrations of acetic acid so they'd be even more effective.
 - The dish soap acts as a surfactant and helps the vinegar adhere to the weeds better.
 - You could also consider adding a cup of salt to that liquid solution as well as we know what salt will do to weeds.
 - Stir everything together very well and pour it into a spray bottle for easy application of it.
- ✓ Then ideally on a hot and dry morning, spray it on and around the weeds, fully saturating them, repeating this daily until they're dying off.
 - Try to spray down its stem to get some to the roots below if at all possible, too.
- ✓ Of course, for best results, you'll need to keep an eye on the weather as you want a non-rainy day so that your solution doesn't get washed off and/or accidentally seeps into any nearby plants or adjacent lawn close to your gravel.
- ✓ Vinegar used by itself is apt to only dry out and brown the the leaves, whereas adding the salt is going to help it get down to the weed's root and obtain a better kill.
- ✓ Depending on the type of weeds and their maturity some people claim the above solution can be very effective.
 - Some claim that their young weeds were killed in less than 24 hours.
 - Others say it takes a few days before you really start to see any results.
 - Again, you're experimenting so it may take a few attempts to determine what seems to work the best for you and your particular weeds.
- ✓ **As with all these DIY options, they work best on young annual weeds but may not be as effective on older weeds or mature perennial weeds.**
- ✓ **This option is not necessarily a permanent solution for tougher weeds and may take repeated applications to take full effect.**
 - For perennial weeds and random grasses with larger root systems, this may not work well, because the plants will almost always grow back from their roots.
 - As I said, if you're using stronger concentrated horticultural vinegar, that will be more effective and require perhaps only a couple applications to do the job.

OPTION 4: Fire Up The Weed Burner and Torch Them!

- ✓ I've personally tried this and it's been very effective as a non-toxic weed-killer... But it leaves an unsightly mess of dead burnt out blackened weeds, needless to say...
 - And then you'll want to easily pull out or rake out their remnants, of course.
 - That's perhaps a small price to pay labour-wise for being a very effective *weed-destroyer*.
 - Of course, we're talking about on gravel... You'd never use this on a lawn or within a garden or else, say goodbye to those plants, right?
- ✓ I've got one of those propane "tiger torches" and they're more than powerful enough to burn out these pesty intruders.

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- Flame weeders or tiger torches can be purchased online or at most garden centres or nurseries.
- Tiger torches can probably be rented too, though that may cost as much as just buying one.
- A flame weeder can be used to kill weeds, though it will need to be done carefully.
- A flame weeder consists of a wand connected via a LPG hose to a propane tank and it blasts the weed with a burning flame that heats the plant and ultimately burns it/kills it.
- Each weed only needs to be touched for a matter of seconds to kill it.



- ✓ They're fun to use, I guess I'd have to say, too. I mean, think about it... It's like a flamethrower that essentially burns the whole weed, potentially right through to the root, effectively obliterating them in such a way that they won't normally be re-growing anytime soon.
- ✓ WARNING, however - The not so great news is if your gravel is made up of lightly-coloured pebbles and stones, you might also burn your stones, changing the colour of your gravel in a way you hadn't anticipated nor are too pleased about... Hence why I say... EXPERIMENT... Try a small area first so that you get a better idea of what's going to happen with your gravel, and your weeds.
- ✓ It goes without saying... Be very careful and responsible so that you don't burn other plants, your lawn, or worse yet, your own feet. Keep children and pets away while you're torching your weeds.
 - If you're ok with all that, this might just be one of the best DIY options for gravelled areas that have weeds.
 - I do this every year on my gravel driveway and pathways.
- ✓ It's easy to do but of course, you'll have to be moving that heavy BBQ propane tank along with you as you torch these usurpers.
 - Given my own experiences I'd say you definitely wouldn't want to be doing this if yours is a large gravelled area as you'll quickly feel "the burn" so to speak in your arm muscles as tiger torches (or any larger torches), in particular, are rather heavy as is a BBQ propane tank to move around everywhere... This may be too heavy and awkward, therefore, for some people to comfortably and safely handle.
 - Plus it can be rather tedious if there are a lot of weeds.
 - You probably could use one of those small canisters if your torch has the right connection on it, or it's a lighter weight flame weeder you're using, though I'm not sure how long that would last... You may need more propane than only that.
- ✓ Something I had noticed when I was using my torch is that the mere intense heat itself seems enough to seriously wilt the leaves (i.e. everything above ground).
 - It messes with their internal cell structure most assuredly.
 - For younger newly emerging weeds that may be enough to kill them... So this may make you think that it's done the job.
 - However, I found with my particular more mature hardier perennial weeds in my driveway, they bounced back some days later with new growth as it hadn't been enough to reach down to their roots.

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- So, I'd recommend totally torching them... Burn them away entirely or else they may grow back.
 - For the hardiest weeds that may have longer tap roots, I found you also may need to torch them a second time once they've attempted to recover.
- ✓ Some people have used an electric thermal weeders, which do not have a flame but can shock weeds with heat of around 1200°F.
- This reduces any risk of fires as there is actually no flame.
 - That's something one may try if they'd feel more comfortable with that.
 - I've seen them online on Amazon and other places, too.

*** Overall, if you happen to own or want to purchase one of these torches, it can be a great option for small gravel areas.**

OPTION 5: Pouring Some Boiling Water On Them

- ✓ Of course, boiled water is non-toxic but the question is, how effective would it really be?
- ✓ I'd say, sure, give it a try for some smaller younger newly emerging weeds that have just popped up.
- That may be marginally effective at scalding and killing those ones.
 - Try to get it not just on the leaves but down the stem and into the root if at all possible.
 - Overall, the simple process of using boiling water is likely in most cases, to be an inefficient method compared to others.
 - For starters, anything more than a small patch of weeds would require multiple trips to and from the home with a hot kettle in hand... and that's not exactly practical.
- ✓ Obviously boiled water will have no lasting impact or negative residual effects on adjacent grass or soil.
- But that one advantage isn't enough to make it a serious contender as an effective weed-killer option.

OPTION 6: Try Some Good Ole Baking Soda

- ✓ So, yes, baking soda does indeed kill weeds – but you need to make sure it doesn't kill anything else nearby or adjacent that you want to keep alive, too.
- For small newly emerging weeds, you don't need much baking soda to kill them and may see results from just liberally sprinkling baking soda on top of them.
 - For larger, harder to control more mature or perennial weeds, repeated applications may also be necessary to completely kill them over time.
- ✓ Baking soda essentially dehydrates plants, which eventually kills the weeds.
- Experiment with how much to use on your particular kind of weeds.
 - If used correctly, some people claim baking soda can kill weeds permanently.

CAUTIONARY NOTE: Experimenting comes with some risks if we're unaware or not too careful... If you're mixing or combining some of these DIY options, be mindful of one that you may not want to be experimenting with or combining. **Mixing certain ingredients such as baking soda and vinegar isn't an advantageous idea.** Although mixing vinegar and baking soda is not considered dangerous, you should still avoid mixing these in a container. Vinegar is acidic and basic soda is basic, so the by-products are sodium acetate, carbon dioxide, and water that are not toxic. The mixing reaction causes the baking soda to foam up and produce carbon dioxide gas. If these chemicals are kept in a sealed container for a long time, it could cause a small explosion because the carbon dioxide will try to escape.

OPTION 7: Bleach Can Be An Effective Weed-Killer

- ✓ Another, albeit slightly more noxious way to control and kill off weeds is by using common household chlorine bleach (approx. 5% sodium hypochlorite).
 - In that sense it would NOT be considered environmentally-friendly.
- ✓ **Bleach can be very effective in killing even mature weeds, and unlike vinegar, may prevent new weeds from coming back because it remains in the soil.**
 - In the case of addressing weeds in gravel, any residual bleach still there won't be a problem if it's always going to only be gravel there.
 - In fact, bleach is very alkaline so when applied undiluted it raises the soil pH level to what's normally unsuitable for most plants including weeds and therefore may prevent those weeds from coming back for a long time.
 - Remaining in the soil for up to a few days at least, it can work at the root level to slowly kill the weed. The sodium content of the bleach essentially interferes with a weed's ability to absorb minerals. It also kills micro-organisms that assist weeds' growth.
 - Given its residual impact in soil be sure that rain water or ongoing irrigation or sprinkler activity won't cause any recently applied bleach to leach away or drain into adjacent lawn or garden or flower bed areas. The bleach could harm that grass or those plants that you want to keep alive.
- ✓ To apply it, simply pour 1 part bleach to 4 parts of water or so, into a spray bottle and then spray it onto the weeds, fully saturating them.
 - Try to direct some of that down the stem and towards the roots if at all possible, too, not just spraying only the leaves.

CAUTIONARY NOTE: As mentioned previously with vinegar, some people online have suggested adding a wee bit of dish soap to your bleach spray so that it adheres better to the weeds. **However, I'd greatly caution you about that.** Generally-speaking, mixing any kind of cleaning products can cause chemical reactions or even release a toxic gas. **Some dish soaps include ammonia and/or hydrogen peroxide, both of which you'd NEVER want to mix with bleach...** There may be other chemical reactions depending upon what's in your particular dish soap, too. SO PLEASE BE VERY CAREFUL if you're planning to add any kind of dish soap as a surfactant for better adhesion of the bleach.

- ✓ Bleach isn't always guaranteed to get enough of it down to the ground wherein it can kill the roots, meaning unless properly applied, the weeds may recover and grow back again.
 - As such, it may not be a permanent weed-killer option, and you may need to repeat your spray applications too, to obtain maximum kill.

CAUTIONARY NOTE: As previously mentioned, experimenting comes with some risks if we're unaware or not too careful... **If you're mixing or combining some of these DIY options, be mindful of one YOU CANNOT, YOU MUST NOT combine.** MIXING CERTAIN INGREDIENTS SUCH AS BLEACH AND VINEGAR IS A DEFINITE NO-NO. It can cause poisoning that sometimes requires hospitalization. Mixing bleach and vinegar creates a harmful chemical reaction that essentially releases chlorine gas. What's worse is that this toxic gas is completely invisible, so the only way to detect it is by smell (or the side effects you might experience after being exposed to it). **Apart from that serious risk, just don't ever combine bleach with vinegar or as I said earlier, ammonia or hydrogen peroxide...** That being said, bleach can be an effective weed killer against most types of small or young weeds in particular.

- ✓ I've personally experimented with bleach and it was quite effective for me... However, it might have been so for different reasons that I originally assumed...
 - I have some industrial bleach which is around 15% concentration; it's in granular form, not liquid. So I experimented, mixing a cup of it (which is a heck of a lot as I was hoping for a one-time killer application) with about a gallon of hot water. I figured that would be the best and quickest way to dissolve the bleach granules as I stirred them. (Wear a mask when mixing bleach as its fumes are essentially toxic.)

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- What I didn't realize at the time but have learnt subsequently (though this is debatable apparently) is that adding hot water to any bleach slowly decomposes the active ingredient and can make it less effective. The higher the temperature the faster the bleach degrades.
- So what I actually ended up with that seemed to work so effectively on my particular weeds in my gravel was akin to *liquid salt*...i.e. the sodium component of the bleach. And as I said, I had added a cup of it to my spray.
- Adding hot water breaks it down and reverts it to salt, which as we know isn't a good thing to add to soil if you want anything to grow. So in my case, whether it was the bleach itself or the salts within it, they pretty much killed my weeds.
- Within 24 hours most were fully dead and almost blackened as my concentration was rather strong. A few weeds made a feeble attempt at bouncing back after many days, so I'd assume the bleach hadn't penetrated deep enough down to the roots. A second application easily killed them as the first one had clearly damaged those weeds quite a bit.
- Overall, I was very pleased with the results, though you do have to subsequently remove the dead remnants of the weeds, needless to say, which is something you'd have to do with any of these DIY options, as the dead plants don't magically disappear on their own.

A few final summarizing thoughts on... Long-Term Weed Prevention in Gravel Driveways and Walkways

- ✓ Achieving a weed-free gravel driveway is a proactive and more often than not, ongoing or at least occasional or periodic task. By focusing on creating an environment in your gravelled areas where weeds struggle to survive, you optimize the driveway's or walkways' condition to prevent the growth of unwanted weeds over the long term.
- ✓ That starts with maintaining a well-packed driveway, ensuring that the gravel depth is ideally at least 4 to 5 inches. This minimizes the spaces where weeds can grow and more easily take root.
- ✓ As discussed earlier, though perhaps only a benefit for the first couple years, you could consider laying weed suppressant fabric between the soil and the gravel. It would help though it's not a permanent or ongoing benefit.
- ✓ Remember too, that over time, gravel gets displaced, and especially weathered and packed down, so it's essential to reapply new layers of gravel every once in awhile. Doing this not only replenishes the displaced gravel but also helps in smothering any existing or newly arising or returning weeds, making it challenging for them to emerge and survive.
- ✓ Another consideration is improving the driveway's drainage. Make sure it's level and has no depressions within it. You want to eliminate any puddles or standing water after a rain, as these would naturally become areas that enable weeds to take root and thrive.

I'm sure these aren't all the DIY experiments people have tried or could attempt to address their weed problems in small gravelled areas. As I said, some of these, we have some experience with and some others are from helpful information gleaned online.

Glean from these whatever may be of help to you.

I guess the one main message to take for dealing with weeds in gravel is to get them early.

All of the methods outlined here can work on small younger weeds, however the longer you leave them to mature and take deeper root, the more your options and their results reduce quite significantly. And by letting them seed over your gravel you are then encouraging a new generation of weeds to make their home in your yard. Neither do you want them to go to seed and replicate themselves elsewhere like on your lawn or adjacent flower beds or gardens, too, right?

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I'd probably still venture to say, that if you catch them early enough, there won't be many at a time and hand weeding may, indeed, still be the best way to remove weeds in gravel.

But you now have some other options if you weren't aware of these before. For those who prefer more natural approaches, you can now try to leave the chemicals as a last resort.

HAVE FUN EXPERIMENTING! Be careful and try a small area or outcropping of weeds first to determine what may work best for you.

And... as you know... We're only a phone call away at Scott's Quality Lawn Care.

So, if DIY'ing it isn't for you, don't hesitate to call us. We can offer you helpful advice and proven lawn care services that work and do all that we promise and guarantee that they do.

All the best to you in your ongoing lawn care efforts!

***** SPECIAL NOTE *****

We love helping our clients have great-looking lawns! Of course, we always welcome your inquiries, but we also want to help educate you, too. So many of you have told us how much you appreciate the articles we make available to you.

If there are any questions you may have about your lawn or any challenges or problems you may occasionally encounter with your lawn, don't hesitate to give us a call. As with the above info article you've just read, we also have other highly beneficial lawn care articles, too...

Here are some we've created to support you with your lawn care efforts. They can help you identify any problems as well as offer some possible solutions for some of those occasional challenges lawns can encounter.

These info articles are not meant to be one-time definitive cures for whatever might ail your lawn. We all wish it was only that simple... But, there are no magic "spray this once and your lawn will be perfect thereafter" solutions... Unfortunately, those don't really exist, as much as we might all like them to. However, there are many things you can do to get your lawn in great shape and keep it that way. We encourage you to glean what you can from any of the following articles that may interest you. And for what you're not sure about, give us a call, let's talk about it, and we'll do what we can to help you.

You may reach us at 780-678-6450 if you'd like to receive any of these via email. It would be our pleasure to do our part to help you "make your lawn the envy of your neighbours"...

From Our "**PROACTIVE LAWN CARE**" Series Of Articles —

7 Steps To A Great Lawn

Caring For Our Lawn Over The Winter

Proactively Preparing Your Lawn For Drought Conditions

From Our "**WHAT YOU'RE NOT TOLD**" Series Of Articles —

What You're Not Told About All-Natural & Organic Lawn Care Alternatives

What You're Not Told About Bats & Their Guano

...See more on next page...

"Your Home Turf Advantage"

From Our **“WHY?”** Series Of Articles —

Why Is My Grass So Thin?

Why Dead Spots On My Lawn?

Why Am I Getting Mushrooms In My Lawn?

Why Are The Pine Needles Killing My Grass?

From Our **“HOW TO GET RID OF...”** Series Of Articles —

How To Get Rid of Ants

How To Get Rid of Dew Worms

How To Get Rid of Fairy Rings

How To Get Rid of Quackgrass

How To Get Rid of Thistles

From Our **“DAMAGE BY DOGS & OTHER CRITTERS”** Series of Articles —

Fixing & Preventing Dog Spots

Damage Caused by Voles

From Our **“SEEDING LAWNS”** Series Of Articles —

Grass Seeding For New Lawns

Overseeding For Existing Lawns

From Our **“DIY”** Series Of Articles —

DIY_Alternate Ways To Remove Weeds In Gravel Areas

From Our **“COMMON LAWN FUNGAL DISEASES”** Series Of Articles —

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases (Compendium Of All Common Ones)

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_The Usual Causes

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_Snow Mold

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_Leaf Spot & Melting Out

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_Ascochyta Turf Leaf Blight

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_Brown Patch

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_Summer Patch

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_Pythium Blight

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_Red Thread

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_Rust Diseases

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_Powdery Mildew

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_Dollar Spot

Common Lawn Fungal Diseases_Fairy Ring

INFORMATION ON OUR FIVE PRIMARY LAWN CARE SERVICES —

FERTILIZER & WEED CONTROL:

Our Fertilization & Weed Control Program

Possible Reasons For Still Having Weeds

Ten Reasons Our Program is Different

ENRICH SOIL ENHANCER:

Our Enrich Soil Enhancer Program

Different Soil Types Have Different pH Levels

...See more on next page...

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WEEKLY MOWING:

How The Weekly Lawn Mowing Works
Our Quality Control Program
Ten Reasons We Are Different

CORE AERATION:

Why Aerate Your Lawn?

POWER RAKING:

Why Power-Rake Your Lawn?