

MultiFaith GROWS
Basic Vegetable Garden Weed Strategies

1. Before Planting: Fall cleanup and Spring cleanup

- i. Always remove all weeds before amending and turning the soil in Fall or Spring
 - a. Do not let weeds over winter
- ii. Try to get as much of the weed's root system as possible
- iii. Weed the surrounding areas to keep weed seeds from migrating into area

Some Options:

- a. Pull all weeds
- b. Spray these non food producing areas with a weed killer (after removing seed heads from the weeds)
- c. Use a pre-emergent in these areas to keep existing weed seeds in the soil from germinating
- d. At the very least weed whack or mow these areas down at least four times a season to keep seed heads from forming
- e. Spread a thick layer (6") of coarse mulch (will take longer to break down—better value) in pathways

2. After planting

- i. Mark plants with colorful ties so they will always be distinguishable from weeds
- ii. Use a weed barrier in the planting beds and around plants—this will also help to retain moisture and improve/nourish the soil
 - a. Soil is moist a few inches down before using any type of barrier
 - b. Black weed cloth (will not improve/nourish soil)
 - i. Untreated, slightly aged (wait a few days) grass clippings
 - ii. Make sure grass has not been sprayed with herbicides in the last eight weeks or contains weeds
 - iii. For more protection place newspaper under the grass
 - c. Straw
 - d. Sweet Peet or similar type (finely ground untreated mulch, plant fibers and manure mix) www.sweetpeet.net
- iii. Weed barriers should not touch the base of the plants—leave a ½" bare area around the plant stems
- iv. Weed weekly—the smaller the weeds the shorter the roots and the easier and quicker they will pull out

- a. Do not let weeds form seed heads –once seeds get into the soil they can be viable for up to ten years
- b. Use a long handled hoe to quickly remove tiny weedlings

3. Establishing a new garden in a very weedy area

- i. Mow down and then smother the weeds

Some Options:

- a. Use cardboard or newspaper with a layer of mulch on top
 - b. Use weed barrier cloth with mulch on top
- ii. After weeds are cleaned out --Put raised beds on top of the weed barrier and bring in new soil for the beds
 - iii. Then follow the rest of the steps above for control