



Are Weeds Killing My Lawn?

The answer to the question above is NO! Although, I must admit, I've gotten that question many times, one must understand that weed growth is a result of a bigger problem, an unhealthy lawn, not a cause of decline. Likewise, killing the weeds will not cause the grass to grow. Weeds and turf are in competition, and the strong will survive.

There are many causes of turf decline: too much nitrogen on Centipede and St. Augustine, over- or under-watering, stresses or damage from drought, poor drainage, disease, insects, heat or cold, shade, lack of nutrients, or an accidental misuse of a pesticide. But, most issues begin with over-management, applying too much of something for lawn improvement when it doesn't want or need anything at all. Proper management, after all, is turf-type specific. Centipede needs less management followed by St. Augustine, Zoysia, and then Bermuda.

If you suspect a nutrition issue, a soil test will provide the needed information. Your local Extension office can assist, if needed. If you question shade being the problem, go outside and look up. St. Augustine followed by Zoysia are the two most shade-tolerant grasses but not for full shade. Centipede has some shade-tolerance and Bermuda has none. Keep in mind, trees grow and so do their canopies which produces more shade over time.



Lawn thinning out by shade created from this mature Sawtooth oak

We cannot control the amount of rainfall we receive but we CAN control the amount of irrigation we apply. 1-inch total per week or 1/2 inch two times per week during early morning hours, is a good rule of thumb during dry periods. You can increase it to 1 1/2 inches during periods of extreme heat. Measure the output using a flat-bottom container, such as a tuna can, by measuring the amount of water in the container after a run cycle. Adjust the output time as needed and correct areas with poor drainage, if possible. Turn your irrigation OFF when receiving periodic rainfall. Your lawn doesn't have to be watered every week, rainfall or not.

Pesticides are handy tools for keeping weeds, insects, and diseases at bay. They must be used according to the label to be effective and not damage your turf. Many weed control products are ok to use on some grass type but not others. Application rates may also change depending on turf type. Timing of application is also important. There are many suggestions on a pesticide label to help prevent turf and/or environmental damage. Read and follow them!

The presence of a great number of weeds is a sign the turfgrass is not thriving. There are many stresses that affect desirable turf such as those mentioned above, including over-management. After the turfgrass is gone, weeds move in due to more available sunlight. For more information refer to Publication 1322, *Establish and Manage Your Home Lawn*.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Deer in the Home Landscape	2
Garden Calendar	3
Tomato Fruit Spray	4
Blueberry Harvesting	5
Lantana	6
Event Flyer	7

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Deer in the Home Landscape

Deer may be beautiful animals, but they can become a major headache for gardeners. As neighborhoods continue to expand into wooded areas, deer are showing up more often in home landscapes and feeding on flowers, shrubs, and trees. An adult deer can eat up to ten pounds of plant material each day, leaving behind significant damage.

Fencing remains the most effective long-term solution. Deer are capable of jumping surprisingly high barriers, but in most situations an eight-foot fence is enough to discourage them. Some homeowners also use electrified fencing systems for additional protection, especially around vegetable gardens or valuable ornamental plantings.

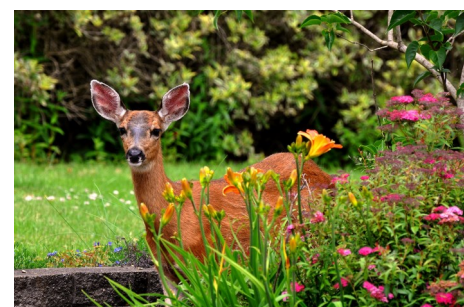
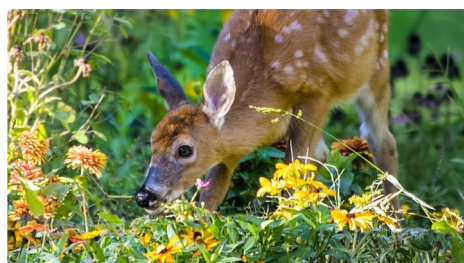
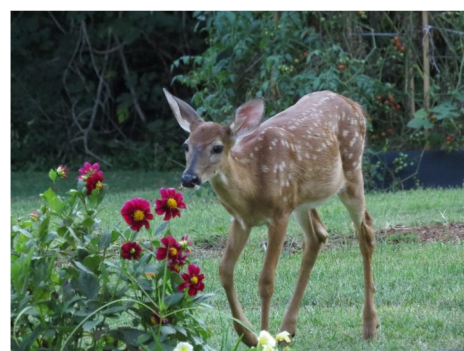
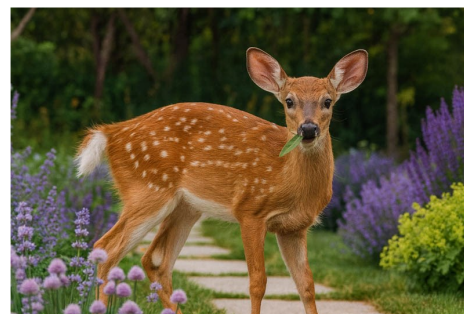
One of the smartest and simplest approaches is selecting plants that deer tend to avoid. While no plant can be considered completely deer-proof, many species are far less appealing to deer and can greatly reduce browsing problems in the garden.

Good deer-resistant shrubs such as boxwood, forsythia, barberry, and butterfly bush are less likely to be damaged.

For flowers, gardeners can rely on dependable perennials like co-reopsis, daffodils, allium, and dusty miller. Annuals such as snapdragons, begonias, and marigolds also provide colorful displays while being less appealing to deer.

Fragrant herbs and flowers such as mint, rosemary, and bee balm are also less appealing to browsing deer.

Although deer can be difficult to manage, thoughtful plant selection can make a tremendous difference. By incorporating more deer-resistant plants into the landscape, gardeners can enjoy beautiful outdoor spaces with far less frustration and damage throughout the growing season.



Garden Calendar: June

Planting

- Plant Crape Myrtles in bloom to be sure of color.
- Replace turf in deep shade with ground cover: Liriope, Ajuga, or Jasmine. Set out Caladiums in shady areas.
- Plant summer annuals: Ageratum, Cockscomb, Impatiens, Marigolds, Sunflowers, Four-o'clocks, and Periwinkle.
- Plant Tomatoes late this month to insure harvest late into fall. Cherry Tomatoes are a choice that are heat tolerant.
- Choose Daylilies now that they are in bloom for planting in your garden.
- Divide and replant Iris, cut leaves back to 6 inches after transplant.
- Plant Zinnias and Marigolds now for a second crop of flowers.
- Plant Snapbeans, Lima beans, Cucumbers, Eggplants, Peppers, Squash, and Tomato plants.
- Gladiolus planted now will give lovely fall blooms.



Fertilizing

- Fertilize Camellias with Azalea-Camellia fertilizer if not done earlier in the year.
- Fertilize Bermuda and Zosia grass. Fertilize Tomatoes, Cucumbers, and Zuccinis monthly with 5-10-10.
- Fertilize annuals and perennials.

Pest Control

- Mow lawn in the morning to reduce the chance of starting Brown Spot (fungus).
- Remove Zinnias with powdery mildew and replant.



Pruning

- Prune Oleander after blooming ends. Pinch Dahlias and Mums to assure a compact growth habit.
- Remove blackberry fruiting canes after harvest. Prune new canes to encourage side branching.
- Faded flowers should be removed from Daisy, Daylily, and other summer flowers.
- Prune out dead and damaged wood from trees and shrubs.

In Bloom

- Ageratum, Althea, Balloon Flower, Bee Balm, Begonia, Blackberry, Butterfly Weed, Coreopsis, Cornflower, Feverfew, Funkia, Gladiolus, Hollyhock, Japanese Iris, Lily, Nicotiana, Petunia, Phlox, Rose Scabiosa, Shasta Daisy, Sweet Pea, Verbena, Butterfly Bush, Golden-rain Tree, Hypericum, Mimosa, Stewartia, Sourwood, Vitex, Yucca, Jasmine, Crape Myrtle, Daylily, Geranium, Hibiscus, Hydrangea, Impatiens, Lantana, Morning Glory, Oleander, Plumbago, Portulaca, Purslane, Salvia, Veronica, Dusty Miller, Four O'clock, and Zinnia



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Tomato Fruit Spray

What do you spray to control insect and disease pests on your tomatoes? Although there is no one tank mix that works for every situation, and it is important to rotate to active ingredients with different modes of action to prevent resistance. Zeta-cypermethrin (GardenTech Sevin Insect Killer concentrate) controls fruitworms, hornworms, stink bugs and leaf-footed bugs and products containing chlorothalonil and copper octanoate are for disease control. There's really no reason to not include a fungicide in your tomato spray for insects.

These active ingredients are all in products that can be purchased from local lawn and garden centers in small, home garden-sized containers. All three products are tank-mixed according to label directions and applied as a single spray, taking care to get thorough spray coverage of the entire plant, especially the undersides of leaves. Begin spraying a week or two after setting transplants and continue spraying at 7 to 10-day intervals for the remainder of the season. Rates may vary depending on the product so carefully read and follow label directions for all products used as these PHI are for tomatoes and may vary for other fruits or vegetables. Do not overuse these active ingredients; alternate with other recommended treatments to prevent resistance.

All three of these products have a 0-day pre-harvest interval, but allowing a couple of extra days before resuming harvest is never a bad idea. A good practice to get into is to harvest your ripened fruit, spray, and then wait two to three days before picking again. This practice along with always washing and peeling fruit will ensure safe and high-quality fruit and vegetables.



Rotating active ingredients helps prevent the development of resistance. Mancozeb is a good alternative for chlorothalonil, but, because it has a 5-day preharvest interval, it is best used in early season. If caterpillar pests are your only insect concern, spinosad is an effective alternative for zeta-cypermethrin, but spinosad does not control stink bugs and is best used in early season when stink bug numbers are low. Permethrin is a good substitute for zeta-cypermethrin but beware of using tank-mixes containing chlorothalonil and an emulsifiable concentrate, such as many formulations of permethrin, on peppers. This can result in severe phytotoxicity. Also, permethrin and zeta-cypermethrin are both pyrethroids, so rotating between these two products, or other pyrethroids, such as bifenthrin or cyfluthrin, does not help manage resistance.

What about organic options? There are several organic fungicide products, and organic insecticides that contain spinosad will do a great job controlling fruitworms and hornworms. But other than hand-picking and foot-stomping, there are no good organic options for stink bugs and leaf-footed bugs. Be timely with your sprays. Both conventional and organic fungicides work best when applied before disease development, and insecticides work best against young, recently hatched caterpillars.

See Extension Publication 2347, *Insect Pests of the Home Vegetable Garden*, for more information on insect control, including examples of brand name products that contain some of the active ingredients mentioned here.





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Blueberry Harvesting

In Mississippi, blueberries are ripe from May-July. Whether you are picking from your blueberry bush or picking from a local pick-your-own operation, these blueberries are a healthy snack full of essential nutrients.

When picking blueberries, it is best to harvest after morning dew has evaporated to reduce postharvest fruit rots. Harvesting at peak ripeness gives you the most nutrients and the best taste. These berries are ready to be picked with they are uniform in blue color. When picking, look towards the stem end of the berries where the color may still be green, white, or rose even if the berries look mostly blue. If you pick them too early before they ripen, they will be sour. Once berries begin to ripen, harvest every five to seven days until harvest is complete.



Blueberries can immediately be eaten after harvesting. They can be refrigerated for a short period of time, or you can freeze them for longer. Be sure to wash berries before eating. If refrigerated or frozen, wash berries just before eating or cooking them. Washing berries before storing can make them break down and leak.

OVERNIGHT OATS WITH BLUEBERRIES

- ½ cup blueberries (fresh or frozen)
 - ½ cup uncooked old-fashioned oats
 - ½ cup low-fat yogurt
 - ¼ cup low-fat milk
1. Wash blueberries and set aside to drain on paper towels or in a colander.
 2. Combine blueberries, oats, yogurt, and milk in a jar or container with a lid, and shake to combine ingredients. Chill in the refrigerator overnight or for at least 6 hours.

For more information about growing blueberries, check out our *Extension publication 1758, Establishment and Maintenance of Blueberries* and Extension information sheet 1448, *Fruit and Nut Review – Blueberries*.



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Lantana

Because Mississippi landscapes get so hot in the summer, one of the best go-to plants is the lantana. This is a great plant that thrives in the heat and humidity of summer, providing consistently bright colors and nonstop blooming through summer and into fall. Lantana is available in a variety of sizes and colors. Newer selections have a smaller growth potential. Smaller plants open up an entirely new landscape option for lantana.



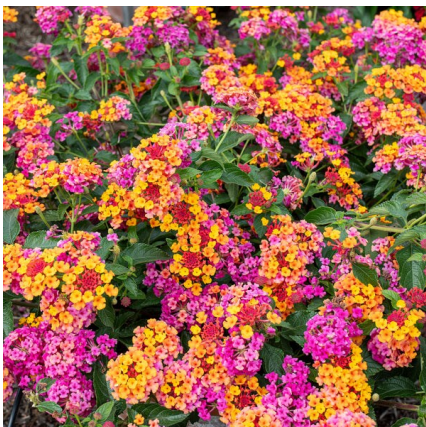
Many lantanas have a spreading growth habit that can act as ground covers and are full of nonstop blooms. You can actually use these plants instead of flowering annuals. Once established, lantanas are reasonably drought tolerant, but you will need to water them during dry periods.

Lantana selections have been selected as Mississippi Medallion winners. New Gold lantana was one of the first of these proven landscape winners chosen in 1996. This plant is covered in bright golden-yellow flowers. It is vigorous and low growing with a dense, trailing habit that can reach 1 to 2 feet tall and spread up to 3 feet.

For many years, Butter Cream lantana has been a winner in the landscape. Its unique flowers start out bright golden-yellow before the flower edges turn creamy white, and then the entire flower turns white. During the summer, there is a beautiful blend of these sunny flowers on the plant. Butter Cream's low-mounding growth is very similar to that of New Gold lantana.

If you're already a fan of lantanas, try a small lantana variety that is available. Ally Klaire, which was developed at a Mississippi nursery, has flower clusters that start out as mixtures of yellow and orange-red. As the flowers mature, they transition to possibly the reddest lantana currently available. Ally Klaire lantanas stay a compact 2 feet by 2 feet, making them perfect for smaller spaces. And like all lantanas, the butterflies and hummingbirds love them. Lantanas are also deer-resistant, which is another reason why my wife and I love them.

Plant lantana in full sun for best flowering performance. Make sure landscape beds are well-drained and amended with organic matter. During periods of low rainfall and high temperatures, lantana flower colors will make your landscape pop.



Lantanas are perennial most years on the coast as well as much of the southern part of the state. When I think mine have "bitten the dust" over the last couple of winters due to the low temperatures, they're still thriving! A layer of pine straw added as a blanket may provide enough winter protection for them to return in north Mississippi.

For those that survived the winter, cut them back hard in early spring to about 4 to 6 inches to make room for the new growth. Prune lightly through the summer to help maintain the plant's size and tidiness and to stimulate more flowering and a bushier structure. Fertilize once a week with a water-soluble fertilizer to maintain flowering potential.



Protecting Pollinators, Supporting Nature

Pearl River County Beekeeping Association Meeting

Date: Saturday, June 6, 2026
7:00 p.m.

MSU PRC Extension Office
835 Highway 26 West, Poplarville, MS

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for a time of friendship and fellowship

The meeting starts promptly at 7:00 p.m

Speaker: Dr. Eddie Smith
Topic: Plants Beneficial for Bees and Other Pollinators

For more information, contact Dr. Eddie M. L. Smith at 601-403-2280 or eddie.smith@msstate.edu

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