

# *Ebert's Greenhouse Village*

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## **America's Most Wanted**

They're big. They're bad. And they're ugly.

They are among America's most wanted, and they may be hiding out in your yards as we speak!

They've made our lives miserable in the past, and they'll continue to do so until they are caught and taken far, far away from us.

But wait! Even that may not stop them! We are not safe! They are using earth's water supply, the air we breathe, and even our neighbor's backyards to get to us, to threaten and intimidate us.

We must stand strong, and we must stand united against our common enemies -WEEDS!

After working in my yard this past season, I'm tired. Yes, I'm weary of the constant battle with the weeds. Just when I think they're finally gone, that I've finally defeated them, another battalion of enemy weed seeds parachutes in from neighboring properties. I realize now that a bit of preventative medicine applied earlier on would've saved me countless headaches and backaches from this pervading pack of pesky plants.

Here are some preventative measures YOU can use at home to keep the "Weed Gang" at bay. Keep these tips handy so you can go into battle now and again early next spring to hopefully hold your ground against these notorious bad guys:

1.

Pull weeds when they are in their infant stages. Baby weeds have small root systems which are easy to pull out.

If you allow a weed plant to get established, you're looking at a more stubborn, independent individual. This guy is grounding himself! Once entrenched, it's difficult to pull and get the entire root out. As many of you know, if you leave some of the root behind, it will continue to grow. Use a long screwdriver or weed-pulling tool with a forked end to get down into the soil, loosen it, and get deep roots out completely. If you hear a pop, you've broken the root off, and another weed will grow.

To alert you to the real threat that exists among us, consider the fact that the roots of Canada thistle can burrow as deep as 10 feet!

2. Mulching with a 2-3 inch layer of organic material - shredded bark mulch, cocoa beans, cocoa beans/rice hulls mix, marsh hay, dried grass clippings, etc. - will prevent many weed seeds from germinating in the soil.

As you know, plants need several things in order to grow properly - air, water, soil, and sunlight. Without sunlight, not too much will be happening with weed seeds at soil level.

To prevent rot on your garden plants, keep mulch a few inches away from stems. Mulch retains moisture and keeps roots cool, but a combination of moisture and cool temperatures can also breed mold, mildew, fungus, and rot.

3. Pull weeds when the soil is moist. Weeds will come out much more easily than if you pull when the ground is hard and dry. DO NOT attempt weed pulling when the soil is soggy and totally water-saturated though. You will compress the soil as you walk on it and create concrete-like clumps of dirt as you pull weeds out of the ground.
4. If possible, plant all wanted annuals and perennials close together. This will then leave little open areas for weed seeds to take root.

**UNITED WE STAND; DIVIDED THEY FALL!**