

Preventing Lawn Weed Growth Before It Starts

The best way to deal with weeds? Stop them before they even become a problem. **Prevention** is not only **easier but also much less time-consuming** than tackling a full-blown infestation. Here are some key preventive measures to consider.

1. Mow High

Mowing your lawn higher leaves grass blades taller, which **shades the soil** and reduces the chance for weed seeds to germinate. **Aim for about 3 to 4 inches in height** depending on your grass type.

2. Keep Your Lawn Thick and Healthy

A well-maintained lawn with thick grass naturally **crowds out weeds**, leaving little room for them to grow. **Overseeding in the spring or fall** can help fill bare spots, ensuring a dense lawn that's **less vulnerable to weed intrusion**.

3. Fertilize Correctly

Weeds love weak lawns, so feeding your grass the nutrients it needs is key. **Near waterways, use low Nitrogen, Zero Phosphorous fertilizer and leave a 30-foot buffer zone** away from the waterway. Too much fertilizer can do more harm than good, so be sure not to overdo it.

4. Water Deeply and Less Often

Frequent shallow watering encourages weed growth, **while deep and infrequent watering promotes strong grassroots**, reducing opportunity for weeds. **Water your lawn early in the morning**, ensuring it receives about 1 to 1.5 inches of water per week.

5. Mulch and Use Landscape Fabric in beds by lawn

For **garden beds** and areas near your lawn, applying **mulch can block sunlight** from reaching weed seeds, preventing them from sprouting.

Best Lakeside lawn Weed Control Methods

Near waterways, to reduce toxicity for aquatic organisms, there are **environmentally friendly ways to handle weeds**. Natural options can be surprisingly effective, especially for smaller infestations.

1. Hand-Pulling

Pulling weeds by hand is a tried-and-true method for **small, manageable** areas. The key is to pull them out completely, roots and all, to prevent regrowth. Pull weeds **after a rainstorm**, when the soil is moist, as it makes the task much easier.

2. Boiling Water

Pouring **boiling water directly onto weeds** is a simple way to **kill them** without chemicals. This method works best for weeds growing in cracks of patios or driveways.

3. Vinegar Solution

Household vinegar (with at least 5% acetic acid) can act as a natural herbicide. Spray it **directly onto weeds on a sunny day** for best results. Be **cautious** with vinegar, though, as it **can also harm your grass** or other plants.

Put the mixture in a spray bottle and spritz on weeds. Barta says it usually takes two to three days on average to work, depending on the plant species.

4. Corn Gluten Meal

Corn gluten meal, a byproduct of corn processing, can act as a **natural pre-emergent herbicide**. It prevents weed seeds from germinating while also providing nitrogen to your lawn, acting as dual-purpose treatment.

If you need to use chemicals:

Start with the **lowest toxicity possible** and wait the entire recommended time frame for it to work. **Not all herbicides work immediately.**

Avoid putting down **herbicides or fertilizer before a predicted rainfall**

5. Chemicals

Top Safe Weed Killers for Lakeside Lawns

- **Roundup Custom for Aquatic & Terrestrial Use:** Formerly Aqua Master, this is highly effective on weeds in both water and on the bank. It is non-selective and safe for fish.
- **Eliminator:** A non-selective herbicide ideal for killing terrestrial weeds near water, including cattails and algae.
- **Dibrox:** Effective for aquatic weeds and safe for fish/wildlife.

Usage Guidelines Near Michigan Waterbodies

- **Label Compliance:** Always **read the label**. Products such as Aquathol K are effective but have **restrictions** on use in some states.
- **Avoid Runoff:** Treat weeds **on warm, sunny days when rain is not predicted** to prevent the herbicide from washing into the lake.
- **Spot Treatment:** Use **specialized equipment like hand pump sprayers or spot treatments** to reduce the amount of product used, as shown by [Aqua-Weed Control](#).

Safety Note: When using homemade remedies like vinegar and salt, exercise caution, as high concentrations of salt can alter soil chemistry, affecting plant growth.

Products that can harm lakes and rivers

- **RoundUp (Non-Aquatic, traditional.)** This product is not federally approved for use near water. So while it may kill weeds, it will also kill any shoreline plants.
- **Any fertilizer containing phosphate.** Runoff into lakes will cause algae blooms.
- **Weed-and-feed products.** These generally contain way more fertilizer and herbicide than needed and both are readily water-soluble.
- **Glyphosate.** This is a common ingredient in a lot of herbicides. But it's not a targeted weed killer—it also kills good aquatic plants.
- **2,4-D.** A common ingredient in weed-and-feed products, it is also a known carcinogen and toxic to aquatic life.