

## WHERE DO WEEDS COME FROM?

In the spring and summertime the battle with weeds begins. Weed Specialists tell us that many weed varieties came over with our ancestors in the hay and grains brought over with them when settling this great country. Weed seeds can be carried by wind, water and even blown across snow and ice in the winter.

What is the best way to manage weeds? The chemical companies would have you think that they have the answer and in many cases they do. BUT, if you don't want to use harsh chemicals on your lawn or in your garden there are alternatives. Are there "Super weeds" that aren't affected by chemicals? The answer is "YES" (*The Wall Street Journal, June 4, 2010*), herbicides being sprayed on crops in copious amounts are running into these so called "Super weeds" such as Palmer Amaranth, Water hemp, Common Ragweed, Giant Ragweed, Horseweed, Kochia, Italian Ryegrass, and Johnsongrass just to name a few. These same weeds can affect your yard because weeds travel and these have developed resistance to chemical treatments.

So what can be done? Recently I heard a Weed Specialist say there are ways to manage weeds: You can pull them out by hand, or you can use a treatment that involves chemicals or you can learn to embrace them (is he kidding?). There is another option which has been around since fire was discovered, it's called flaming. Have you ever wondered why farmers burn their pastures, or why after a forest fire the weeds and grass come back almost energized? Well it's because the fire burns the weeds and grass and forces a chemical reaction in the plants (a survival instinct) that allows them to come back. Now what's the difference between burning the weeds and flaming the weeds? When a weed is burned it triggers that survival instinct and comes back but when a weed is flamed (heating the leaves of the weed until it wilts or scorched), the weed is damaged and dies. There is a noticeable change in some cases. The flamed weed gets a darker color and wilts (the moisture in the leaves is boiled stopping photosynthesis). Left in this condition for 2-3 days the plants energy is depleted and it dries up including the root. That means no more back breaking chores of digging up weeds or harsh chemical use.

How easy is it to flame weeds? If you have the right tools it's a cinch. When flame weeding, the most effective method is to catch weeds early, from 1-4 inches tall. At this small stage, flaming is nearly 100% effective, whereas weeds over 4 inches are more difficult to kill without an extended dose of heat. By destroying cell structure in the plant leaf, the weed will no longer put energy toward growth, so even on big weeds you will see a stunting effect or even a kill, depending on how established the root system is and how long the plant was exposed to heat. On smaller weeds a slow walk is usually the best pace - just a split second of heat should kill unwanted weeds and grasses. Flaming is fast, easy and dare I say it is Fun.

Where can I find these tools? The best tools on the market are made right here in the USA, in La Crosse, KS since 1959 by a company called Flame Engineering, Inc. under the Red Dragon brand [www.reddragontorch.com](http://www.reddragontorch.com). Flame distributes their sustainable products all over the world. So save your back, save your time, save the environment and start flaming today.