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Is vinegar a solution to weed control?

According to information provided by Purdue Extension, based on USDA research on using acetic acid or vinegar on common weeds such as Canada thistle, the results can be effective.

With a 5-10 percent household concentration, you can kill the younger plants in the first two weeks of their emergence. Once they are older and more established the plants required higher concentrations of acetic acid. This then becomes more dangerous for individuals spraying the plants. Higher concentrations can cause eye injury and burn the skin.

However, higher concentrations have a higher kill rate on plants up to 85-100 percent. With older plants of Canada thistle, it just temporarily burns the vegetative growth. The thistle resprouts new shoots in a short period of time.

If you choose to use vinegar, the soil pH is only temporarily affected because it breaks down quickly. The higher pH will, however, stay around for a few days. The USDA scientists do note that corn is the only crop not susceptible to tissue burn as other crops. More research is needed on ornamental and non-ornamental crops.

Other options to consider if you are looking for an organic method of controlling weeds are the old-fashioned method of hand pulling in your flower beds or under your trees. Corn gluten will affect seeds that have not emerged. Cornell Extension has extensive research on corn gluten.

Contact the Phillips County Extension Office at 854-3616 before attempting any other types of organic remedies.

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