UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources | UC Master Gardener Program

WEED ID AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

1) First ID the weed:
One apt definition of a weed is a plant that is growing where you don't want it.
Typically weeds are very efficient plants and very comfortable in their favored locations with their heightened water absorption and seed dispersal abilities.
Identifying this plant will help you discover many factors. Look closely for plant characteristics: Size and leaf configuration, how it flowers/produces and distributes its seeds and expands its territory; look for any pests and then use the UC IPM Weed Gallery to identify the weed.

2) Decide on a management solution:
The most effective, long-term way to manage weeds is by using integrated pest management or IPM. This technique consists of a combination of methods that work better together than separately. Approaches for managing weeds are often grouped in the following categories.

Biological control
Biological control is the use of natural enemies—predators, parasites, pathogens, and competitors—to control pests and their damage. Invertebrates, plant pathogens, nematodes, weeds, and vertebrates have many natural enemies.

Cultural controls
Cultural controls are practices that reduce pest establishment, reproduction, dispersal, and survival. For example, changing irrigation practices can reduce pest problems, since too much water can increase root disease and weeds.

Mechanical and physical controls
Mechanical and physical controls kill a pest directly, block pests out, or make the environment unsuitable for it. Traps for rodents are examples of mechanical control. Physical controls include mulches for weed management, steam sterilization of the soil for disease management, or barriers such as screens to keep birds or insects out.

Chemical control
Chemical control is the use of pesticides. In IPM, pesticides are used only when needed and in combination with other approaches for more effective, long-term control. Pesticides are selected and applied in a way that minimizes their possible harm to people, nontarget organisms, and the environment. With IPM you'll use the most selective pesticide that will do the job and be the safest for other organisms and for air, soil, and water quality; use pesticides in bait stations rather than sprays; or spot-spray a few weeds instead of an entire area.
A last important note on chemical controls……..always read and follow the label. Before you make a selection, you need to know the name of the weed, its life cycle, the soil type, environment conditions (temp, wind, rain) & if your weed is on the susceptible list? Make sure that you have the application equipment, do the correct calibrations and wear protective clothing.

3) Make your move
After you assimilate all the above information you are now properly prepared and can formulate a management plan. You know what weeds you are dealing with and, using the IPM method, can implement those plans. Always dress accordingly……safety first.

Information links:
UC integrated pest management definition/description:
https://www2.ipm.ucanr.edu/What-is-IPM/
UC IPM
Weed Research and Information Center
https://wric.ucdavis.edu/
Weed Photo Gallery
http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/weeds_intro.html