

What are diseases?

Like people, plants can suffer from bacterial, viral and fungal attack. Whichever part of the plant is attacked the effect is usually to weaken or sometimes kill it.

Can disease be avoided?

Disease is a sign that a plant is under stress. The best prevention is to keep plants healthy by making sure they are fed, watered and weed-free. You can reduce the likelihood of disease affecting your plants by controlling weeds. Groundsel is a host for rust so keeping groundsel out of your garden will help keep rust off your plants. Some plants, such as roses are particularly prone to disease. When buying new roses choose a disease-resistant variety, check the label before you buy.

Taking action

If your plants are affected by disease, you can take control in the early stages by picking off the diseased leaves. When chemical treatment is needed systemic fungicides can be applied.

Identifying diseases

Here are some of the most common diseases:



Rust

So called because it forms rust-like orange pustules, often on the underside of the leaf. Mint, roses and hollyhocks are among the plants prone to attack by rust. Spraying with a fungicide does work - so long as it's done regularly throughout the summer.



Rose black spot

Disease causing black spots on leaves. Some rose varieties are more resistant to it. Burn the fallen leaves; cut off spotted stems when pruning. Repeated anti-fungal spraying helps.



Powdery mildew

Grey powdery coating on the leaves of roses and other plants. Mulching, balanced feeding and regular watering help. Some rose varieties are more resistant than others.

Ideal for the job

Weeding

A hoe is in effect a flat knife attached to a long stick. The best tool for tackling annual weeds in beds and borders, a hoe slices through the weeds just below soil level. Left on the surface of the soil on a dry day, they will soon shrivel and die.



Diseased roses

To control disease on roses choose a rose specific fungicide. These also target pests as well as diseases that roses are prone to.



Weed-killing

Ready-to-use weedkillers are the most convenient - no mixing needed and a built-in trigger spray. For large areas of weeds choose one with a lance and nozzle. Avoid windy days and direct sun when applying weedkiller.



how to... control weeds and diseases

tools

- hoe
- gardening gloves
- hand fork
- trowel
- fork

materials

- chemical weedkiller
- chemical fungicide
- horticultural fleece
- weed-control fabric
- mulches - bark, woodchip or gravel

Safety first

Before buying a pesticide product, do you already have some that can be used up? Don't forget to check if the product with a 'MAFF' or 'MAPP' number is still legal to use, visit:

www.pesticides.gov.uk/garden.asp

Products with a HSE number should be checked at:

www.hse.gov.uk/pesticides/bluebook/index.htm



Printed on 100% recycled fibre.



Please remember to recycle this leaflet when you have finished, you could even compost it as the leaflet has been printed using vegetable-based inks.

A summary of this leaflet can be made available in Braille, large print and audio cassette. Please ask for details or email us at diversity@b-and-q.co.uk

Every effort has been made to ensure that the instructions given in this leaflet are accurate and will enable you to do the job safely and successfully. Please follow instructions carefully and seek expert advice in the event of difficulty.

©2008 B&Q plc. Hampshire, SO53 3YX

All information correct at time of going to print.

HOWT0085

Part of caring for your garden is dealing with weeds and diseases. These will affect the health of your plants; keeping a close eye on your garden will help you nip these problems in the bud.

Do you need to use a pesticide?

You may be able to find another way to deal with the problem, visit: www.rhs.org.uk or www.gardenorganic.co.uk

What are weeds?

Weeds are plants in the wrong place – they take space, water sunlight and nutrients from the plants we really want to grow.

Can weeds be avoided?

You can reduce the likelihood of weeds taking hold by mulching beds and borders in spring or after planting, but always clear the ground of weeds first. If creating a new bed, you could plant through weed-control fabric.

Taking action

Hand weeding

If weeds do set in, you can take control by weeding little and often – this is much better than blitzing a garden every few weeks or months, as the weeds won't get too big. Hoeing before weeds flower stops the seeds spreading and is an effective means of clearing annual weed seedlings from flower and vegetable beds. Once out of the ground keep weeds away from other plants and do not compost.

Chemical weedkillers

Trying to remove deeply rooted or dense weeds by hand is hard work. There are four types of chemical treatment available.

Contact weedkillers kill only the part of the plant that is above ground, so are suitable for annual weeds.

Systemic weedkillers such as glyphosate are absorbed by the foliage and carried down to the roots. They are non-residual – they don't pollute the ground – so can be used to clear an area ready for planting. Be patient: they may take up to two weeks to work. And apply carefully – they are non-selective, so will kill any plant they touch.

Residual weedkillers do leave a non-permanent residue in the soil to prevent re-growth and they are non-selective so apply carefully. Suitable for clearing weeds in paths and patios.

Selective weedkillers target specific plants leaving others unharmed and are generally used on lawns.

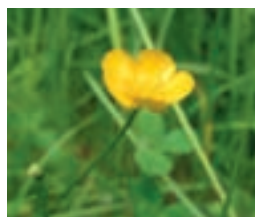
Identifying weeds

In order to be able to get rid of weeds, you need to be able to recognise which ones are invading your garden. Here are eight common weeds.



Bindweed

A perennial fast-growing climber that can smother everything in its path. Digging it up works to some extent but each bit of root left in the soil will grow a new plant – repeat applications of systemic weedkiller are needed to stop it growing back again.



Creeping buttercup

Easy to dig out perennial, as the roots are fairly shallow. The big problem is its ability to spread in all directions by sending out runners – just as strawberry plants do. If left unchecked, it can rapidly ruin a lawn; a selective lawn weedkiller can be used to prevent this.



Dandelion

Don't let dandelions get to the seedhead stage, as the fluffy 'clocks' blow everywhere. The long tap root of these perennials can be dug out, or a systemic weedkiller applied. A selective weedkiller can be used in lawns.

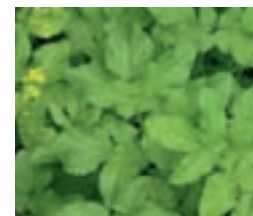


Horsetail

A moisture-loving perennial with jointed stems and small scale-like leaves. It's rarely found in cultivated ground but the roots are too deep to dig out - so if it does appear, apply repeat chemical treatments. In lawns regular mowing will eventually kill it off.

You can do it

When applying chemical treatments to perennial weeds, bruise the leaves before spraying. This will help the leaves to absorb the chemicals, especially waxy leaves such as horsetail.



Ground elder

Highly invasive perennial. Try digging out – but any bits of root left behind will regenerate. Constantly removing top growth weakens it dramatically. If need be, treat with a systemic weedkiller - repeat applications will be needed.



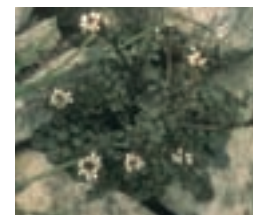
Nettles

A perennial that springs up quickly in vacant spaces. Roots are fairly shallow and can be pulled out by hand (wear tough gloves for the stinging kind), but a dense mat of roots will need treating with a systemic weedkiller.



Groundsel

An annual that looks a bit like ragwort and acts as a secondary host to many fungal rusts. Its lightweight downy seedheads enable it to spread very rapidly. Pull or hoe out, dig in or spray large patches with a contact weedkiller.



Bittercress

An annual that has white flowers for most of the year. The explosive seed pods shoot out seeds at the slightest touch enabling it to spread very rapidly. Pull out, hoe out or dig in before seed pods appear.

Safety first

Using garden chemicals safely

- Always follow instructions exactly, and dilute and apply as directed
- After using garden chemicals children and pets should be kept away from the treated area
- After use, make sure garden chemical containers are tightly sealed and don't leave garden chemicals within reach of children or pets
- Never store garden chemicals in unmarked containers and never buy more than you need for one year
- If garden chemicals get onto your skin, wash immediately
- It is illegal to put any garden chemical down a main drain or waste water drainage system, even when diluted
- Ask your local Council for advice on disposal of unwanted pesticides or empty containers, visit: www.pesticidedisposal.org or www.chem-away.org.uk