



Eradicating Weeds Using Sheet Mulching

Many weeds are nearly impossible to eradicate without digging and sifting through the soil to remove every speck of root, stem, and runner. Bermuda grass, Johnson grass, and nut grass (or nut sedge) are examples of such invasive weeds. To have a successful garden, however, these weeds must be removed and kept out of a garden.

Sheet mulching is an easy way to get rid of weeds in any area where a gardener wants to start from scratch. It is an efficient method of eliminating weeds and improving soil at the same time, learned from permaculture principles. **Sheet mulching is most effective when done during the active growing season**, rather than the winter. Here are the steps:

1. Mow or “weed-eat” the grass and/or weeds down to the ground. You can leave the clippings.
2. Spread ½” – 1” of good manure compost, such as **Lady Bug Revitalizer, All-American Turkey, or Farm Style Compost**. Water in this layer.
3. Lay newspapers down on top of the compost. About a quarter inch thickness (10 – 15 sheets) of newspaper is needed. Be sure to overlap the edges and make sure there are no gaps. Water in this layer.
4. Lay corrugated cardboard on top of the newspaper. Be sure any gaps in the cardboard are covered by another piece of cardboard. It is preferable to use plain brown cardboard rather than the kind with a slick, colored paper covering. Water this layer.
5. There are two options at this point.
 - a. If you would like to create a raised bed, first construct a border for the garden out of untreated cedar, cinder blocks, stones, or other nontoxic material. Then fill the bed with **Lady Bug Hill Country Garden Soil** or **Lady Bug Rose Magic Soil**.
 - b. If you do not want to make a raised bed, or you’re not ready to plant, cover the cardboard layer with two or more inches of any mulch.
6. Leave the compost-newspaper-cardboard layers undisturbed for at least two or three months. Water the area regularly – once every week or two if you can.
7. These layers can be built *around* plants in an existing bed, too. Bring the compost-newspaper-cardboard layers up to 2” – 3” away from the stem of the plant to prevent rotting the stem. However, weeds will need to be diligently pulled from this area around the stem.

Sheet mulching is so effective because it not only blocks the light from the weeds, but the microorganisms in the compost help to break down the weakened weeds before they have a chance to grow through the barrier. A bonus feature of this method is that the layers of newspaper and cardboard do decompose eventually and become part of the soil.

Happy gardening!

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