



# AUTUMN/ EARLY WINTER TIPS

Written by

Lindsay Gray  
The School Of Garden Design





# THANK YOU!

Thank you for visiting our website and subscribing to our newsletter. We publish this four times a year and the next one will be out shortly.

As a small token of my appreciation for visiting the website, I would like to impart a bit of gardening advice that is pertinent for Autumn.

Best regards,

*Lindsay*



# WEEDS

Usually, by this time of year, the weeds have settled and one can focus on other aspects of garden maintenance.

However, due to the heavy rains the entire country has experienced, weeds are still flourishing! (I am thinking of opening my garden to foragers because they would be able to survive for weeks on the blackjacks alone that are still popping up!)

Seriously, the weeds are a massive problem, especially if you live in a medium to large garden or on a smallholding/farm.

## SPRAYING FOR WEEDS

Spraying is one answer to the problem, but it depends on the type of garden you have. If you are gardening to attract wildlife, then spraying isn't the answer because we don't know for sure just how any herbicide affects pollinators and especially the seed-eating birds that collect seed from some of the weeds.

To spray, you need to determine the type of weed you are dealing with. For broadleafed weeds, you can use a product like Banweed MCPA. To deal with this ghastly American chickweed that sticks to everything, the recommended product is Turf Ridder.



If you are going to spray, be aware that all these herbicide products are systemic, in other words the substance will penetrate the plant and be drawn down to the root system.

If you get it on any part of your body, it will have the same effect, so two golden rules are (1) ensure that there is not a hint of a breeze when you spray, and (2) ignore everyone's laughter and dress appropriately - long pants, closed shoes, kitchen gloves as they are not permeable, and even eyewear. You cannot be too careful.

Will these products have an effect on your pets? No, but confine them indoors first, spray on a warm to hot day so that the substance dries quickly - usually within the hour - and you can then allow your pets to roam the garden once more.

## ALTERNATIVE METHODS

There are many alternative options to killing weeds, but they don't work for all species. Vinegar and salt or vinegar and bicarbonate of soda, always with a bit of dish soap added to act as a sticking agent, are two suggested remedies. It has worked for me in some instances, but not in all.

Remember that you cannot use vinegar on any of your desirable plants, especially lawn, because it will kill them.

Boiling water is another suggestion and that definitely works on the more delicate weeds but at the cost of raising your electricity bill.

Give these various options a trial run and see what works for you.



I find this a very effective method. Once the hole is full to the brim and has settled well, you can then create a garden in that space and find another place for your weeds.

## MOST EFFECTIVE METHODS

- Of course, you can always load your weeds into the municipal bags provided or use a garden refuse cartage company to take them away, but always ensure that they are dumping legally at a designated municipal site. Too many of these companies find a spot in open ground and offload their rubbish.
- And then - my absolute favourite - I bury my weeds! I live on a big piece of land, but this can be done on a smaller property as well. Find an area out of sight of your immediate living area, dig a hole up to a meter in depth and as wide as you can manage and throw your weeds in there. Between the natural decomposition process and the rain, you will be amazed at how quickly they break down. Every now and then, add some of the soil that originally came out of the hole and then continue layering any weeds. In the dry winter months, you can water the weeds to speed up the decaying process.

- And, lastly, the best way to avoid weeds is just stay on top of the situation. Over the years, I have tried mulches, turning the seedlings back into the soil and layering newspaper, and they just keep coming. The problem is most likely a seed bed of weeds from a previous owner or seed that is blowing in from neighbouring properties.
- Use weeding as your 'down time'. I grab mine when they are small and, once the root is out, I layer them back onto the soil to decompose. At all costs, never let your weeds go to seed in your garden (my biggest problem) and don't add them to your compost heap.



# FEEDING YOUR GARDEN

Again, with all this wonderful rain we are experiencing, a lot of nutrition will either have been washed away or pushed deeper into the soil so a quick feed before winter sets in will not go amiss.

It will also ensure that your plants remain healthy through the colder months.

If you live in the cooler part of the country, feed now (early - end April). In the warmer parts of the country, you can feed right up until mid-May.

Bearing in mind that plants have a dormancy period during the winter months, even though they might be pushing flowers, this is not the time to apply too much nitrogen except for lawns and, surprisingly, roses.

If you are using a granular fertiliser, then for your garden beds use 3.15 (inorganic if you have pets. and organic if you don't) and then apply a thick layer of mulch over that. No need to dig it in. The mulch, any watering you do and of course, earthworms, ground-feeding birds and other organisms living in the upper layer of soil will ensure that all the goodness is drawn down to the roots.



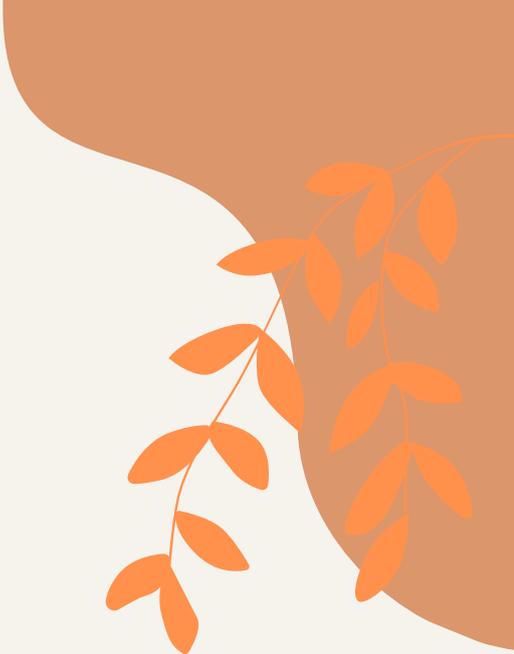
- For lawns, continue to use 7.1.3 or Neutrog's Blade Runner if you have dogs or you can use a 5.1.5 organic pellet if you don't have dogs. The reason I say this is that dogs will eat all the organic pellets and it can put severe strain on their kidneys.
- I love Talborne's products which are organic and do not comprise chicken litter only but plant material and calcium, but if it isn't available at your local store, then any product will do as long as you purchase the product for what you are hoping to achieve.
- Roses will still give you another flush before their winter prune so keep the nitrogen up to ensure that your rose bushes are always full of healthy leaves. 7.1.3, 6.1.5 or any of Ludwig's products will do the trick. I place a tablespoon once a month around each bush at the dripline and not against the stem, and water it in or mulch over the fertiliser.



- If any leaves have black spot - as they will do with all this rain - I pick the affected leaves off and throw them away. Regular inspection of your bushes will go a long way to keep them healthy.
- Foliar feeds for a small garden are also highly effective. Again, check the ratios on the label and ensure that your first number (N), is lower than your last number (K).



# I HOPE THAT THIS INFORMATION HAS HELPED YOU.



If you would like to learn more, we have a wonderful range of inexpensive short correspondence and in-house courses – with more to come – that you can either study with my support or choose ‘self-study’ and work through the course material on your own.

If you are interested in working in the industry, then you definitely need to enrol in our Premier Garden Design & Maintenance course to ensure a successful career.

Contact our office at [info@schoolofgardendesign.com](mailto:info@schoolofgardendesign.com) and we will be delighted to assist you.

## ADDRESS:

55 Ridge Road,  
Hillcrest, KZN, 3650

## WHATSAPP:

082 44 99 237

## WEBSITE:

[www.schoolofgardendesign.com](http://www.schoolofgardendesign.com)