

NATURE NOW

Weed Eradication Could Save Millions

By LYDIA KING FRENSE
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

As summer wanes and the many-hued spectrum of flower bloom fades, the weeds come into their own, not that they are newcomers. Their kind are among the first to quicken the land in earliest springtime; they intrude on all our summer days; they are the last to resist the onslaught of winter.

It is only that now with the end of the harvest the farmer and the gardener alike give up their hard fought war against these their constant enemies. Chickweed and purslane take over the garden. The emptied beds fill up with pigweed, ragweed, milkweed and this.

Their most stems away in the late breeze; the bees swarm over their unkept flower-beds in one last frenzied effort of honey gathering. They cling to life until the earliest snow lifts into their empty seed pods and the winter's relentless wind finally levels them to the earth.

A weed is a plant growing out of place. Botanically, the term does not imply membership in any special classification. However, most weeds, like garden flowers, are members of our most highly developed group, the flowering plants. If wild carrot grows in the garden, it is a lady Aristocrat named for an ancient Queen Anne.

Black-eyed Susan stands tall and shows in a tended bed. **BOTH OF THESE** can be noxious weeds in a farmer's meadow. The same could be said of bouncing bet, sneeze weed, tansy, bitterweed and a host of their kind.

On the other hand, there are certain plants such as thistle, ragweed, burdock, plantain, nettle and cockle bur which are undesirable from any point of view except that of the botanist, who sees them in relation to the overall pattern of life.

As a group, weeds are notoriously hardy and adaptable. They grow untended in a large variety of soils and climates. They are deep and strong-rooted, sturdy-stemmed, quick of growth, prolific of seed, cunning and efficient in habits of dispersal. Many are unkindly to touch and taste.

WEEDS HAVE been uprooted, burned, trampled out and discouraged in every possible way other than man first began to till the soil. This harsh treatment has driven them to find new and better ways of living and setting

Adult Education Program Starts Oct. 6 at High

The first night school program for adult education in the Birmingham school district will be started in October, school officials have announced.

Under the program nine courses will be offered twice each week for a ten week period at the high school.

Registration for the courses will be taken at the Terry school office, Terry and Lincoln, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily. The cost will be \$6 per course.

Merlyn Smiley will instruct a craft shop in the construction of fish lures, fly tying, rods, bows and decoys. This course, open to 15 students, will be held in the industrial arts room on Thursdays beginning Oct. 8.

Two oil painting classes will be offered. A class for beginners will be held in the art room on Tuesday nights beginning October 6 with Angelo Angelico as instructor.

WEEDY ROADSIDES and fields offer sanctuary to a host of harmful insects such as cutworms and beetles. Eradicated by the farmer in tended areas, these pests take refuge in any untended domain into to swarm back again for another season's destructive work.

Wild garlic, which grows so profusely in maple woodlands, will taint milk, butter and cheese, and also onion and mustard. Some poisonous weeds such as death camas, loco weed and cowbane are deadly to pasturing animals.

Man is the worst offender in spreading objectionable weeds. As he sells and exchanges food stuffs, he also exchanges and introduces weeds.

Russian thistle, penny grass and orange hawkweed are some of the plants which have been carried in countless ways across land and sea to become destructive on United States crops.

In my own garden one of the most obvious weeds is "galinsoga", which is native to South America. No one knows how it made its long journey here. This spread and exchange of weeds goes on in spite of the vigilance of an army of specialists who are employed by the United States bureau of economic botany to supervise the coming and going of all plant materials.

The problem of weed control has long since become a national concern. Its program is well documented, but its success depends upon the vigilance of every tiller of the soil, whether his holdings be large or small.

IN THE END it is the naturalist who sees the rabbit bush and the sage, the mesquite and the locoweed, the thistle and the burdock as mighty binders of waste and arid lands. He sees the advantage of the tillage which would be omitted if a weed did not have to be eradicated.

He sees how nature spreads a protective blanket of weeds over soil which a poor husbandman has left bare, thereby preserving it from erosion. He sees how the same weed-blanket when turned under by the plow will make a feeding crop for next year's grain field.

Through years of patient study and observation in the field the naturalist has trained himself to label no plant or animal as "good" or "bad." So viewed, the commonest weed along a dusty roadside fits into its necessary place in the jig-saw puzzle called life.

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Basic outline of photography will be offered in the mechanical drawing room Tuesday evenings beginning October 8. Albert Schumm will be instructor.

Also beginning October 6 will be a class in bookkeeping with Miss Holloway as instructor. Typewriting instructions will be given Tuesday evenings beginning October 6 under Miss Holloway.

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