

Natural Weed Killer Recipe Testing Results

The Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) tested alternative natural weed killer (herbicide) recipes to use instead of commercially available herbicides. This recipe worked well for the testers. It was applied to grass and weeds in full sun. For the first test, in spite of rain after two days, everything that was sprayed died. Nothing had regrown after 60 days in the first tested areas.

Ingredients:

1/2 gallon 5% acetic acid white vinegar

1/2 cup table salt

1/2 tablespoon dish soap

Instructions:

Mix vinegar and salt until salt is fully dissolved. (The vinegar may have to be warmed for all salt to dissolve.)

Mix in 1/2 tablespoon dish soap, once the salt has dissolved.

Add cooled mixture to spray bottle or larger garden sprayer.

Recommendations:

On a bright sunny windless day when no rain is expected for 3 or 4 days, using gloves and eye protection, thoroughly soak only the weeds, grass or foliage one wants to kill. Cardboard and lawn staples can be used to shield any nearby plants that you want to keep; remove the cardboard once area is dry. Do not spray mixture on the grass or any other plants that you want to keep because it will kill them too. It is best to wear long sleeves and trousers. One should avoid any skin contact. Keep people and pets away at least until weeds and area is completely dry. Remove dead foliage and carefully pull up all the roots. Bag and dispose of dead plants in the trash. Do not compost. If necessary, spray again to thoroughly soak any remaining foliage and roots.

It is said to work best when weeds are in full sun on a hot day. The vinegar and salt disrupt the cell membranes and dehydrate the plant, causing it to die. The dish soap helps the mixture to stick to the foliage. If one is spraying around concrete, one may wish to use cardboard screens or omit the salt and use the 20 percent acetic acid vinegar available at garden centers or rinse the concrete, once the foliage is dead.

Both testers did have to use a little heat to get the salt to dissolve into the vinegar. This formula is particularly useful to spray foliage behind the AC unit and other small areas near the home where you do not want to spray chemicals, especially if area is near ventilation intakes.

Photos:

Before and after sidewalk crack:



Before and after mint bush, a few hours post spray:



After photos of mulch and driveway areas. Note nearby grass was unharmed next to dead grass that was sprayed.:



60 days post spray on creeping charlie and pokeweed. Weeds gone and rhodys unharmed.:

