

5 Ways to Banish Weeds Without Breaking the Bank



I've got a little bit more work to do than usual this spring because of the mistakes I made when installing my raised beds five years ago. I was eager to get started and didn't think I'd have issues with weeds since my beds were waist-high. I assumed I'd have to deal with the occasional weed, but in my haste, I never thought about what the roots of nearby cedars might do to my precious growing space. My initial error meant I needed to come up with cheap ways to banish weeds.

Dealing with Weeds in my Garden

Fast-forward to last season, when I dealt with nutrient deficiencies. I was left scratching my head. What was going on? Why was my soil quality so poor? I spent plenty of time amending the soil each season and made sure to add compost and never over-fertilize. What was I doing wrong? Why was one bed

more affected than another? It turns out the cedar hedge roots that border my garden were infiltrating one of my garden beds (the one closest to the hedges). I needed to find a quick solution to a problem that would only get worse over time.

First, we trimmed back the hedges significantly, and then I got to work devising a plan to create a whole new layer of healthy soil. Last fall, my husband helped me cover the existing earth with leftover garden stones (cracked and broken and no longer of use in the yard). We layered stones, dead leaves, and cardboard, leaving a few inches that would need to be filled with soil mix in the spring. These past few weeks, I've slowly been topping up the raised beds with soil and compost. Here's hoping I don't encounter any issues this season! I trust I've rectified my mistake.

Don't make the same error! Banish weeds and tree roots with the following tips:

Use Elevated Planters or Containers

Are you worried about tree roots getting into your raised planters? Don't set them right on the ground. Build elevated, table-top planters or use movable [containers](#) to grow edibles and ornamentals.

Put Down Cardboard

Cardboard will eventually break down, but it's a useful tool for [blocking out pesky weeds](#) like dandelions that seem to pop back up each year without a care in the world.

Use the SFG Method

If you're looking for a planting method that limits weeds, try the square foot gardening method. The close spacing between plants acts as a kind of mulching mechanism to block out weed growth. It's also super easy to spot weeds in an SFG plot

because the invader is clearly the odd one out.

Mulch, Mulch, Mulch

Mulch with wood chips, [coco coir](#), straw, leaf mold, or shredded paper to conserve moisture and eliminate weed growth around your plants. Careful, don't mulch too much. Too-thick a layer of mulch can suffocate plant roots in addition to weeds.

Lay Down Newspaper

Don't have cardboard boxes lying around and need a cheap, easily accessible alternative? Use shredded newspaper as mulch or sheets of newspaper to block out weeds when starting a new garden bed.