

Weeds Help You Diagnose Soil Problems

Understanding why a particular weed is growing in a garden or field can help a grower figure out how to control it. Weeds will often contain high amounts of the mineral(s) that the topsoil is lacking, and they can be the key to isolating a particular soil problem. For example, the presence of certain weeds can indicate soil compaction, low fertility levels, excess soil acidity or alkalinity, or the absence of certain key nutrients. Many of these soil problems are the result of the use and overuse of agricultural chemicals. These toxins, for that is what they are, gradually deplete the soil of its biological life, slowing decomposition, reducing nutrient availability, and increasing soil compaction. Earth-worms are soon discouraged and the life seeps slowly from the soil. Weeds are nature's way of helping to rebuild damaged soil and showing the observant grower just how to do it. Besides being good indicators, deep-rooted weeds can bring scarce minerals back up to the surface and make them available to crops via decom-



position. This is simply a continuous, natural soil-balancing process that increases the level of organic matter via microbial activity. Gardeners and farmers have adapted to this process by delegating certain weeds, called green manures or cover crops, and using natural fertilizers to return nutrients and organic matter to the soil, encourage increased microbial activity and root growth, and attract a healthy earth-worm population.

Make conditions less favorable for a variety of weeds by using AGGRAND Natural Fertilizer 4-3-3 to encourage microbial activity and speed up decomposition and nutrient availability. Weed pressures can often be reduced by balancing the phosphorus (P) to potassium (K) ratio to about 2:1. Use equal amounts of AGGRAND Natural Liquid Bonemeal 0-12-0 and AGGRAND Natural Kelp and Sulfate of Potash (about 2 oz each/gallon of water per 25 square feet) for soil balancing. A soil test is recommended to establish a starting point.