

# Common Weeds of Canada

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## What are Weeds?

A weed is a plant in the wrong place.

It is somewhat difficult to explain in a few words what a weed is. A plant under certain conditions may possess a marked utilitarian value, and the same species under other conditions be considered a pest and injurious to farm crops. A farmer calls any plant a *weed* whose growth interferes with that of the crop to which the soil for the time being is devoted. All weeds are plants, but all plants are not weeds. A weed has all the parts of a plant, grows like other plants, and reproduces itself; but it is a plant that is not wanted because it is out of its proper place. In the mind of a farmer a weed has no proper place; but there is no doubt that every plant in Nature's great collection is, at some time, and in some place, of use in the world.

Although we associate with the term weed the idea of uselessness, the plants themselves may be those which are ordinarily grown on the farm; but the fact of their occurrence where they are not wanted condemns them. Useful fodder grasses may overrun and reduce the value of a hoe-crop; potatoes or buckwheat left on the ground one year may occasion trouble during succeeding years. Cultivated plants out of place are called *relative weeds*; plants which possess no apparent value, and are injurious to crops, are called *absolute weeds*.

Any native wild plant, under special circumstances, may increase and become a *noxious* weed; but there is no doubt that most of our troublesome and aggressive weeds have been introduced from other countries, chiefly from the British Isles. As our country grows older and more thickly settled more