GARDENER’S BANE: SUMMER WEEDS
Lee Royer, Frederick County Master Gardener

A weed for every season is the gardener’s bane. Here are five weeds commonly seen in Frederick County in summer and ways to cope, courtesy of the University of Maryland Extension Home & Garden Information Center. Of course there are many more summer weeds. If your “favorite” summer weed is not mentioned here, such as Nutsedge, Crabgrass, Japanese Stiltgrass, Mile-a-Minute, Bermudagrass, Pigweed, or Clover, check out the following link: https://www.extension.umd.edu/hgic/weeds/summer-weeds

Ground Ivy or Creeping Charlie
_Glechoma hederacea_
Life cycle: perennial
Growth habit: low, creeping plant that roots at nodes; distinct odor when crushed; stems square in cross section; leaves opposite, scalloped, rounded to kidney-shaped and 1/2 to 1 1/2 in. in diameter
Reproduction: mostly by creeping stems that root at the node; less commonly by seeds; flowers lipped, purplish-blue in whorls in upper leaf axils
Conditions that favor growth: prefers damp, shady areas; can tolerate full sun
Cultural control: manually remove plants prior to flower formation and seed production

Pokeweed
_Phylloclaca americana_
Life cycle: perennial resembling a small tree
Growth habit: grows 3 to 8 ft. high, leaves light green, alternate, smooth, lanceolate to egg-shaped, often reddish on underside; stems reddish
Reproduction: seed or large, red-tinged, fleshy taproot; small, white flowers in long, purple-stemmed, hanging clusters; berries green at first, turning glossy, dark purple, leaving a purple-red stain; poisonous
Conditions that favor growth: grows anywhere seeds are dropped by birds; fields, roadsides, fence rows; thrives in deep, rich, gravelly soils
Cultural control: manually remove plants prior to flower formation and seed production

Canada Thistle
_Cirsium arvense_
Life cycle: invasive* perennial broadleaf weed with deep root system
Growth habit: clump-forming; grows to 2 - 5 ft. high; leaves long and narrow, alternate, irregularly lobed with spiny margins; spineless stem
Reproduction: spreads by fleshy, creeping rhizomes; lavender disk flowers followed by fluffy papus capable of floating long distances in the wind; 680 seeds produced per stem; seeds remain viable in soil from 10 - 20 years

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Conditions that favor growth: infertile area without plants covering soil
Cultural control: keep vacant areas covered with turf or ground cover; maintain soil fertility appropriate for the growing crop

**Poison Ivy**  
*Toxicodendron radicans*
Life cycle: perennial deciduous, woody vine; contains urushiol that causes inflammation, blisters, and itching
Growth habit: climbs trees or structures by aerial roots that form hairy, fibrous ropes; vining habit in shade, more bush-like in sun; leaves have 3 glossy 2-4 in. long leaflets, margins variably toothed, lobed, or nearly entire
Reproduction: seeds spread by animals and birds that eat the fruit and by stems that root
Conditions that favor growth: can invade landscapes, woodlands, wetlands by creeping stems or seeds; thrives under a variety of conditions
Cultural control: identify seedlings and remove early in the season; on trees, sever roots growing up the trunk to eliminate the flow of moisture from roots; always take care to protect all parts of the body from coming in contact with all parts of the plant; never burn the plant as toxins can be inhaled in smoke.

**Bindweed**  
*Convolvulus sepium*
Life cycle: perennial vine with deep fleshy rhizomes
Growth habit: vining and more likely to climb than trail
Reproduction: seeds and rhizomes
Conditions that favor growth: found in landscapes nurseries; on fences and hedges; thrives in rich, moist areas
Cultural control: dig up and remove from area as soon as possible after germination; collect and discard all parts of stem as they easily set new roots

*For more information about the Frederick County Master Gardener/Horticulture Program, visit: [http://extension.umd.edu/frederick-county/home-gardening](http://extension.umd.edu/frederick-county/home-gardening) or call Susan Trice at the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County office, 301-600-1596.*
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