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## EC157 Eradication of Bindweed in Gardens and Lawns

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# ERADICATION OF **BINDWEED** *in* GARDENS and LAWNS

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## ERADICATION OF BINDWEED IN GARDENS AND LAWNS

Prepared by the Department of Agronomy  
University of Nebraska

Many city lots and farm yards where gardens are to be planted or could be planted are infested with bindweed. Lawns adjacent to infested areas are often infested because of the lateral spread of underground rootstocks. The following methods are recommended for eradicating bindweed without disturbing the garden or lawn.

### Bindweed in Gardens

Since bindweed usually does not emerge until late April or early May, gardens are often planted on infested ground before it is realized that the area is infested. In such case, the best attempt possible will need to be made to work in and around the vegetables already planted to cut off the bindweed. Where it is known that bindweed exists on the area to be gardened, erect-growing plants such as sweet corn, early cabbage, onions, and tomatoes to be staked should be planted. It will then be possible to hoe close enough to the stems of the desired plants to cut off all the bindweed.

The infested area should be hoed at 10-day intervals and care should be exercised that all bindweed plants are cut off. The plants will re-emerge in two or three days if they are cut about an inch below the surface. They should be permitted to grow for about a week before again being hoed. This will be a total of about 10 days between hoeings. During the week of growth the bindweed plants draw food from their roots for making top growth. By the end of the 10-day period several leaves will usually have been formed and extra food material manufactured by those leaves will be stored in the roots. It is then time for the plants to be cut off forcing them to draw again on the stored food reserve. Continued repetition of this process will result in the starvation of bindweed in about two years. As long as the bindweed is continuously cut off,



it should not reduce the yield of garden plants, especially if the area is watered.

### Bindweed in Lawns or Gardens

Spudding or Pulling Individual Plants.--Bindweed plants growing in well-established lawns do not seem to have the recuperative power of plants growing in a cultivated field. The infested area should be gone over thoroughly once every two weeks and individual plants either pulled or cut off below the surface with a spudder. Approximately two years will be required to complete eradication. This method can be used in gardens also but the plants should be cut or pulled every ten days.

Individual Plants Treated with Sodium Chlorate.--Individual bindweed plants can be treated with sodium chlorate, either dry or in solution, and the plants may either be cut or left uncut. If the plants are not cut, the chemical must be applied at the crown of the bindweed plant. The least injury to the lawn results when individual plants are cut with a spudder about one and one-half inches below the surface of the ground and sodium chlorate applied at that depth. One-half teaspoonful of dry sodium chlorate or an equivalent amount of the chemical in solution should be placed in each hole. The whole area should be thoroughly watered immediately following treatment in order to leach the chemical deep enough in the soil to prevent injury to the grass. It is necessary to watch the area and give a similar treatment to plants that continue to emerge. One treatment should exterminate the greater percentage of the plants. This method can be used in gardens also for destroying scattered plants, but where the area is heavily infested, sodium chlorate should not be used since it will sterilize the soil and damage the garden crops.

Over-all Treatment with Sodium Chlorate.--Over-all treatments of one pound of sodium chlorate per square rod at each of five two-week intervals has effected eradication in one year with slight injury to the grass. The application of one-half pound of sodium chlorate per square rod at the same intervals resulted in no apparent injury to the grass, but complete eradication required one additional treatment the second year. Thorough watering after treatment, as indicated above, is essential. The sodium chlorate should be thoroughly mixed with about five pounds of dry sand for each pound of chemical in order to insure enough quantity to facilitate a uniform spread. This method should not be used around small trees and shrubbery or in gardens.



Carbon Bisulphide.—Carbon Bisulphide is a volatile liquid the fumes of which are heavier than air. When it is applied to a bindweed-infested area, the fumes move down through the soil and kill the roots. The soil is rendered sterile for only a few days. The chemical must be placed below most of the grass roots. It can be poured or injected into holes six to eight inches deep and eighteen inches apart in rows eighteen inches apart. Two ounces of carbon bisulphide are placed in each hole, and the holes tamped shut after the treatment to prevent the fumes from escaping. This method has proved satisfactory for eradication of bindweed with slight injury to the lawn. The cost is approximately \$1.50 per square rod for the chemical alone. Since this method is very costly, it is not recommended for general use in gardens.

#### Bindweed on Areas Adjacent to Lawns and Gardens

Bindweed rootstocks can spread laterally for several feet under the surface of the soil before plants appear. For this reason lawns or gardens adjacent to undisturbed bindweed infestations are constantly being invaded by rootstocks from such areas, and despite diligent effort toward eradication of the scattered bindweed plants, they continue to emerge. Physical barriers such as concrete walls and galvanized iron set to a depth of three feet along borders of infested areas will reduce the spread of bindweed but will not prevent it altogether. Chemical barriers are not recommended at present.

Where bindweed on an adjacent lot or area is not kept under control, an attempt should be made to secure the cooperation of the owner of such an infested area in getting the bindweed eradicated. A request by several interested individuals is usually more effective than that of one alone.

Numerous cities and villages in Nebraska have passed ordinances making eradication and control of noxious weeds compulsory. Noxious weed eradication districts may be organized in cities and villages as well as in rural areas as provided by the Nebraska Noxious Weed Law. Information regarding the organization of noxious weed eradication districts can be obtained from the Noxious Weed Division, State Department of Agriculture and Inspection, State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska.