

Dandelion Control

- Dandelions are often a sign of **soil compaction**. Practice organic lawn care maintenance so that you will have a healthy soil and hardy lawn with dense young grass plants that will out-compete dandelions. This includes **aerating** and **over-seeding** your lawn.
- Cut the grass or pick the heads off before the dandelions go to seed.
- Take dandelions out by hand using a **weeding tool or knife**. Make sure to remove as much of the root as possible. This is easiest when the soil is moist and the dandelions are still seedlings.
- **Cut** dandelions with long-handled shears. Cut as close to the ground as possible, removing all the leaves. This may need to be repeated until the plant dies. Cutting the plant should starve the dandelion of nutrients and it will eventually die.
- **Corn gluten meal** can be purchased and spread over your lawn in early spring. Corn gluten meal is a pre-emergent natural herbicide that prevents germination of seeds but does not harm existing plants. The timing is very important for the application of corn gluten meal; the end of April is about the right time. It must be applied just before the weed seeds begin to germinate. It can also be applied later in the season to deal with any weed seeds that have blown into your yard. Corn Gluten Meal is 10% nitrogen by weight so it also acts as a natural fertilizer. Note: corn gluten meal also prevents germination of grass seed. If you are over-seeding in spring, wait 4-6 weeks after applying corn gluten meal.
- Spray **vinegar** directly onto dandelions for 3 seconds, or pour **boiling water** over dandelions. Be careful however, as both can kill grass.
- Or, **enjoy** your dandelions! Young fresh dandelions leaves make excellent additions to salads, but only if they haven't been sprayed with pesticides. And dandelion heads can be used to make wine.





Ant Control

Ants are generally beneficial to your lawn. They can turn more soil than worms and are good predators, but sometimes they can be a problem.



- **Top-dress with compost or topsoil** after aerating to keep your lawn rich in organic matter. This will keep the soil moist and create an environment that is unfavorable to ants.
- Repeatedly **raking** the ant hills will encourage them to locate elsewhere.
- Plant flowers, shrubs, and trees to attract **songbirds**, they will gladly help with your ant problem.
- Make a **slurry of orange peels** using orange peels and orange juice. Pour over the area of concern. Part of the chemical composition of orange peels is apparently toxic to ants.
- Spread **diatomaceous earth** over the affected area, it cuts open the bodies of crawling insects. Repeat application if a heavy rain occurs. Diatomaceous earth is made up of tiny shells and is non-toxic, but try not to inhale it. Ants are said to die or leave within 48 hours of contact.
- **Rhubarb tea**: boil rhubarb leaves in water and cool. Then pour over the area. CAUTION: rhubarb leaves are toxic.
- **Flood** the ant colony by soaking them deeply with water, or pour **boiling** water on the colony.
- Create a **boric acid bait**. Mix 3 cups of water, 4 teaspoons of borax and 1 cup of sugar. Place the mixture in 3-6 screw top jars. Loosely pack with cotton wool. Screw lids on tightly and poke holes in the lid. Place the jars near points of entry or along ant trails. Keep away from pets and children and clearly label as poisonous. Some people have success just sprinkling borax and icing sugar over the ant pile.
CAUTION: Borax contains boron which, when used in large quantities, can kill all plant life and can remain in the soil for years. It is also dangerous if consumed, so keep pets and children away from the affected area.

Note: When applying any organic treatment directly to an anthill, wait until evening or night time when most ants are in the colony.

