

## Weed Control and Trees

By: Toso Bozic

Weed control is an ongoing process in the first few years following the planting. There are many weeds that will compete with trees and shrubs for moisture, sunlight, space and nutrients. Without weed control, many trees and shrubs will not survive, establishment and growth of trees will be poor and money spent on trees and site preparation will be wasted. Many studies show that regardless what weed control you use, the tree survival will increase, as well as vigor and overall health of trees and shrubs.

There are three methods of weed control including mechanical, chemical and barrier (mulches) weed control. In any case, without proper weed control, the chances of the trees dying increases. It may require up to five years of controlling weeds until the tree can stand itself. There are several considerations prior to planting the trees to decide what weed control is best for. It is important to understand and evaluate these options that will be best suited for you. Prior to you planting the trees, you may want to think of the following:

- **Time** - do you have a time for weed control for your trees? Many folks are too busy to plant agriculture crops or other spring activities where time becomes a huge issue to do the work of weed control. It will take a certain amount of time to keep the weeds out and it requires at least 3 times during the year where you need to deal with weeds in trees
- **Equipment** - what kind of equipment do you have or may need to acquire certain equipment to do weed control. If you are putting plastic mulch, you will need a plastic mulch applicator available to you. Do you have small equipment to do mechanical control in the soil? Same thing applies for chemical spraying. Using wood chips requires hauling materials and spreading them among trees. Make sure that you do have equipment that is best suited for you for your weed control
- **Cost** - cost of trees is relatively low compared to 5 years weed control. Whatever weed control you decide to do, make sure that there is cost related to and budget for it. Mechanical weed control could be at higher cost compared to plastic mulch or some other weed control measures. Also you may not be able to purchase some chemicals due to certain regulations
- **Physical fitness** - weed control is hard work and requires certain physical fitness to do weed control during hot and humid days.
- **Labour** - if you don't have a time nor the resources, you may choose to hire somebody to do tree planting as well as weed control. This could be your family member or just a local contractor but make sure they are qualified and reliable for services that you were asking
- **Weather** - not much you can do about a weather but it plays a big role when it comes to mechanical and chemical control. Using data from local weather stations or other online sources will help you when to do weed control

Once you take these considerations mentioned above, you may get a better idea what is best method of weed control.

It's also crucial in the first few years to monitor your trees once a week for any potential damages for insects, diseases and animals.

For more information:

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[www.yardwhispers.ca](http://www.yardwhispers.ca) or [www.attsgroup.ca](http://www.attsgroup.ca)

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### Questions? Contact your local Agricultural Fieldman

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