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ECOLOGICAL SCIENCE TECHNICAL NOTES - FOR IN SERVICE USE

TECHNICAL NOTES

U.S.D.A., NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE - St. Paul, Minnesota

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Purpose: To transmit technical note Agronomy #15: Weed Management in Organic Cropping Systems

Filing Instructions: File this Technical Note in the agronomy section of the MN Technical Notes binder and replace the table of contents. This note can also be found on line in section I of the eFOTG, under Technical Notes & References by Discipline, Agronomy and on the Minnesota NRCS Home page, under Technology, Technical Notes.

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Agronomy Tech Note #MN-15 Weed Management in Organic Cropping Systems

As every organic farmer and home gardener knows, weeds are more than just annoying: they are a major challenge to production. Before weeds can be controlled in an effective and environmentally sound way, they must first be accurately identified and their basic biology understood.

A new tool that can help with this is the [Online Resource for Organic Weed Management](http://www.css.cornell.edu/WeedEco/weeddatabase/index2.html), offered by Cornell University. This web based tool is available at:

<http://www.css.cornell.edu/WeedEco/weeddatabase/index2.html> and can be used for:

1. learning to identify major weeds at all growth stages
2. learning various ecological strategies for controlling those weeds
3. understanding the response of weeds to farming and gardening practices.

It presents the relevant scientific information available on the biology / ecology of each weed species and offers effective ecological approaches to their management. Weed species profiled on this website include velvetleaf, Powell amaranth, redroot pigweed, common ragweed, hedge bindweed, Shepherd's purse, common lambsquarters, Canada thistle, yellow nutsedge, barnyardgrass and quackgrass. Additional profiles are in the works.

Another useful tool for this same purpose is [Agronomy Facts #64: Weed Management in Organic Cropping Systems](http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/freepubs/pdfs/uc187.pdf). This publication is from Penn State University and is available on their web site at: <http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/freepubs/pdfs/uc187.pdf>. When managing weeds in organic systems, producers use many of the same techniques used in conventional systems, but they rely much more on non-chemical control strategies, such as prevention, crop rotation, crop competition, and cultivation. To plan an effective weed management program in organic systems, you should consider historical pest problems, soil management, crop rotation, machinery, markets, weather, and time and labor. Adjusting weed control strategies based on these factors and observing and avoiding potential threats will help you stay ahead of weed problems. This publication includes information on all of these topics and is a good reference for organic as well as conventional producers.