



STEP 2

MAINTENANCE

Weed Control

Weeding will always be the biggest concern for yards with planting beds. For a space planted with perennial native plants, you will have to undertake an active weeding regime until the plants establish, typically for 2 growing seasons. This is important because native perennials are most often available as small seedlings and weeds can quickly outcompete them for space, water, nutrients and light.

Under the Alberta Weed Control Act, noxious weeds must be controlled, which means to remove the risk of spreading. Prohibited noxious weeds must be destroyed, meaning all growing parts of the plant must be killed.

Best methods for removal and proper disposal for the various regulated weeds can be found in the [Fact Sheets](#) supplied by the Alberta Invasive Species Council.

Weeding Techniques:

1. Pull after a rainfall

It is easiest to pull weeds out of moist soil.

2. Pull when still young

As weeds grow, so does their strength and root system making it difficult to remove. Be careful to not accidentally pull your seedlings at this time as weeds and your plants can look similar when young. Consider using temporary tags to help identify and get to know your intentionally planted vegetation.

3. String Trimming (whipper-snip)

This option is great for large areas planted with native seedlings, as many only grow up to 6 inches in the first season. String trim a bit **above** your native seedlings, removing the tops of weeds, weakening them. You may have to repeat this but eventually the weeds will be choked out.

4. Cut at Base

Cut the weed at the base, leaving its roots in the ground.

Reasons for this are:

- Pulling the entire weed out can damage the growing root system of your new plants.
- Pulling out a weed's root system disturbs the soil in that area. Disturbed soil becomes more susceptible to new weed invasion and can trigger dormant weed seeds in the ground to start growing.

5. Avoid Seed

Be sure to remove weeds before they go to seed otherwise a whole bunch more weeds will join your battle.



For prolific seeding native plants, any of their unwanted volunteer seedlings will be a part of your weeding process. To eliminate some of these, you can deadhead (remove the seed head) those plants prior to seed release. It is important to note that this does remove that seed food source from wildlife using your yard.