

Shotweed Invasion, Beware!
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Whether it's the fancy names (*Cardamine hirsuta* or *C. oligosperma*) or the common names (Spitweed, Pop-in-the-eye-weed, Little Western Bittercress, Artillery weed, Shotweed), no matter what label is attached, that little winter vexation is back with a vengeance. Oh, but take an intimate look at Shotweed. It is a charming Crayola green rosette. However, do not allow its amiable good looks to bamboozle you or its sweet little white flowers to beguile you. Snatch it out of your garden beds ASAP. Carpe diem! Most importantly, do not allow it to seed (review the list of names for a valid explanation). The good news is that with determination, diligence and a few tricks up your sleeves, it can be conquered (almost, probably, maybe).

Pulling Shotweed is the first offensive tactic. Its shallow tap root allows for easy yanking, but if you have beds that are loaded, rake up as much as you can remove and mulch mulch, mulch (a nice 3-4 inches). Winter mulching is especially good to conquer this nuisance. Added bonuses; the leaves are down, the ground is damp and a layer of mulch will help winterize/protect plants as well.

What about garden paths and gravel driveways? Options include: a propane weed torch (a dolly is helpful in lugging the propane canister); boiling water; a high acidic (15-20%) white vinegar poured into a spray bottle and rock salt is effective cast in the cracks of brick work/gravel. But here is a concoction that will definitely wreak havoc on Shotweed: 4 cups white vinegar, ¼ cup salt, 2 tsp. dish detergent; mix carefully making sure the salt is dissolved so as not to clog the sprayer and spray away. Avoid hitting the keepers.

Pre-emergent tactics (for future reference) are: spreading corn gluten in open areas (it kills the seeds, all seeds) and planting what Cornell University calls "Weed Suppressors:" matting type plants such as Moss phlox or Creeping thyme; clumping plants such as Lady's mantle, Lamium and Lilyturf are also good choices.

In using some of these heavy hitting offenses we might contradict what nature writer R. M. Pyle states, ". . . make no mistake: the weeds will win; nature bats last." Let's be optimistic, give these options a shot and take names later.

NOTE: Yard and Garden Lectures Jan/Feb; Master Gardener Class Feb-May; MG Plant Sale May 12; Secret Garden Tour June 16. Info at: WSU Extension/Jefferson County.