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## ARTICLES

Documents: Latest From: **Art Drysdale:**

### Lawn Weeds & No-Damp

Just What do You do to Kill Unwanted Lawn Weeds Now in Ontario, Québec & Elsewhere; & No More No-Damp  
by Art Drysdale

by **Art Drysdale**

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Art Drysdale, a life-long resident of Toronto and a horticulturist well known all across Canada, is now a resident of Parksville, British Columbia on Vancouver Island, just north of Nanaimo. He has renovated an old home and has a new garden there. His radio gardening vignettes are heard in south-western Ontario over two radio stations: Easy 101 FM out of Tillsonburg at 2 PM weekdays and CD98.9 FM out of Norfolk County at 11:40 AM weekdays.

Art also has his own website at <http://www.artdrysdale.com>



May 24, 2009



Just over a week ago, I had two inquiries come in from Ontario, and asking similar questions--questions that have been far more difficult to answer since the passing of Ontario's Premier Dalton McGuinty's Bill 64, the law preventing the sale and use of "cosmetic pesticides" in that province. The first inquiry came from a reader who did not want his name mentioned. His question concerned the unwanted growth of "tiny white/pink flowered plants in his lawn. He said the numbers of these had expanded each year until now they basically covered an entire large lawn. From his description I was quite certain the plants are the formidable English daisies (*Bellis perennis*), which are commonly found in lawns in--England, of course. It is not as common a phenomenon in eastern Canada except in certain municipalities in southern Ontario, although it is reasonably common here in the milder parts of British Columbia. I've included a couple of photos to illustrate.

The second inquiry came from an old friend in Toronto, Carol (nee Cronk) Hallam, who was in my Form 13A at East York Collegiate Institute, as was her husband Bob Hallam. She wrote: "Do you have a remedy for getting rid of violets that have invaded our back lawn? They are very pretty, but there are far too many of them!!!!...thanks for any solution (no pun intended) you can offer."

Carol, it doesn't really matter what they are because theoretically you cannot buy a chemical to control them. Any old 2,4-D product would get them but you would need to apply it at night so your neighbours wouldn't report you to McGuinty's Pesticide Police! Your only options are Acetic acid (vinegar) products, of which there are a number now, but you may as well use straight white vinegar, it will be cheaper. The problem with such products and with vinegar itself is that they are non-selective, and will kill everything (including the grass) to which they are applied.

Also available are new products such as Sarritor (which, as far as I know is only available through custom applicators like WeedMan), and an even newer one Adios Ambros. The latter comes from Herbanatur Inc. in Québec and was developed and is being used primarily for the control of ragweed. I have little additional information on it but hope to have more in the near future. As to Sarritor, I have written about it here on two occasions.

Of course there are also the weed poppers (such as the Garden Claw one which is hardly available now, but there are others, including by Fiskars. At least you don't have to get down on your hands and knees using one of those tools.

It is interesting to note that a gentleman by the name of Randy Hillier (<http://www.hillierforleader.com>) who is the sitting M.P.P. for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox & Addington in eastern Ontario recently announced his intention to seek the leadership of the Ontario Conservative party (to replace present leader John Tory). One of his platforms is that a government lead by him would abolish Liberal McGuinty's foolish bill 64--the act to ban cosmetic pesticides. He would, instead, return that responsibility to the municipalities. I'll try to write a bit more on this in a future column.

The next item this week started with a question posed on this site's Forum (on March 23), regarding the product No-Damp. Connie (from zone 5b) asked, "No-Damp is no longer available in Canada. It is a fungicide used to prevent damping-off diseases in seedlings and cuttings. Does anyone have an alternative product or method of preventing damping-off?" In response, four days later, Trish writing from zone 8b added: "I Googled and found people using camomile tea. I tried it a few days ago and just waiting to see if it worked. Does anyone know why No-Damp was taken off the market."

Also on the same day, Donna Dawson said: "I will ask Art why it was taken off the






Above, two shots of English daisies growing in lawns in Vancouver Island's Rathfrevor Provincial Park; followed by two shots from our garden here, of the same plant being grown as a decorative ornamental. Note they should be considered biennials rather than perennials; and finally the familiar bottle of the now off-the-market No-Damp product. Author photos.

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market. That was a great product! He will either respond on the blog or in one of his articles." Finally, on April 14th, Brian from zone 2a, added: "Is a replacement available under another name? or an organic home version."

First, I must tell you I do recall the first three exchanges, and I did send an e-mail but unfortunately it was not answered. Just this past week, Connie wrote to Donna again, saying: "I posed the question about the availability of No-Damp. See Forum Section, Doktor Doom, April 14, 2009. Plant Products Co., Ltd., in Brampton, Ontario are no longer selling it. Is there further information on your site with regards to an acceptable safe replacement?"

Like Connie and others, I also searched the Web for No-Damp and found it still listed as an available product on the Rona Website. I found that strange because Rona are currently advertising on Canadian television that they are voluntarily withdrawing the sale of all "cosmetic" pesticides in all of their stores. So, I wondered why they would still be selling No-Damp. I called their customer information number and the gentleman who responded said the product had been withdrawn some months ago by Plant Products Co. Ltd. themselves. I then asked him why they would still be listing it on their Website. His response was, "we've been having some problems with our Website." I told him he should have the Webmaster remove it immediately. I would suggest that Rona's is one of those Websites in which you cannot place too much faith!

That all caused me to get in telephone contact with Sandra Jovasevic, Technical Co-ordinator at the company's head office in Mississauga. From Sandra I got the full story! Some time ago, the federal government requested Plant Products supply additional efficacy and other data about the product. As is so often the case, the research and science needed to supply the information requested would have cost many times more than the company would have gained by keeping the product on the market.

Over the years, I have many times had the opportunity to test a new product that someone or a small company had developed which worked very well, but it was never brought to market because of the never-ending research that was needed to document it.

Sandra told me that was exactly the decision Plant Products made about No-Damp--to stop making it and phase it off the market, which they did. Incidentally, forget about going to the U.S.A. and looking for No-Damp or a similar product because Plant Products never did sell No-Damp into that country. It was only sold in Canada. And, Sandra tells me that as far as she is aware, there is no substitute available on the market anywhere.

So gardeners, that leaves you to your own devices in preventing damping-off disease in germinating seedlings. Ideas would include the use of guaranteed sterile media such as Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss, Coir, Perlite and horticultural Vermiculite.

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