

Followup from Charles Merfield's November 19, 2009 COABC Fall Seminar Webinar
"Innovative Concepts & Techniques for Successful Weed Management in Organic Cropping"

Question 1 - by a plumber's torch do you mean the standard acetylene type?

No - the builders / road workers types that run on LPG / propane, e.g.,

http://www.bullfinch-gas.co.uk/index.php?page=shop.product_details&flypage=shop.flypage&product_id=82&category_id=7&manufacturer_id=0&option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=1

or

<http://www.cfh-gmbh.de/content1.asp?area=hauptmenue&site=produkte&cls=02&pgID=2&upgID=0&pID=540#picture>
These have much larger heat output and flame size than an oxy acetylene torch and don't require an oxygen bottle.

Question 2 - Tips on control for barnyard grass?

I have never had to deal with this species and from a quick look at the literature it appears to like hotter conditions than I have farmed in. I can't there give any advice from my own experience, and without a detailed review of the literature anything I say may well be wrong. The following website is a bit technical, but has some good background information

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/graminoid/echcru/all.html>

If you looking for weed info on the web always search under the scientific name, e.g.,

Echinochloa crus-galli

<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&safe=off&q=%22Echinochloa+crus-galli%22+control+OR+management&aq=f&oq=&aqi=>

to get the best info and avoid the often less than accurate home-gardening advice. Wikipedia

<http://www.wikipedia.org/>

Is a good place to start if you only have the common name, and often has some great general info as well

Question 3 - Any ideas for getting rid of quack grass in an orchard?

Quack grass (*Elytrigia repens*) - first question, is it causing any problems or could you live with it as a living mulch? Having said that I have seen quack grass cause major plant size and yield reductions in high bush blue berries, so just because it's low growing does not mean that it won't be competing strongly with the

trees! What I have seen is a couple of places in Ireland is quack grass eliminated by two years of thick red clover *Trifolium pratense*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trifolium_pratense

but it has to be kept well watered and growing up to about knee high to out-compete the grass. You then have to get rid of the red clover, but it has a vertical crown with above ground stems so dies out under regular mowing. It's similar to lucerne / alfalfa *Medicago sativa* in that respect but the foliage is much thicker so more suppressive of other plants.

Question 4 – (was discussed but thought Charles may have more ideas)

Any ideas for controlling chickweed in late fall vegetable crops? Late fall planting, challenge when soils are wet, I find chickweed especially challenging in a crop like corn salad

I don't have a lot more to add. Using a flame weeder to make stale seedbeds into which you can transplant may help. Longer term getting the weed seed bank down will be critical, which fallows can help with, but it would be better to rotate into other crops or pasture for a while.

In wet soils the most effective interrow hoe is the brush hoe - by miles



<http://www.fobro.com/export/EN/Gemusebau/Pflege-mechanisch/FOBRO-Hackburste.html>

and it's an ideal platform for the mini-ridgers - which can also work in pretty wet soils behind the brush hoe as I showed in the presentation.

Hope that helps

Cheers
Merf