

How Do I Get Rid of Johnson Grass?

Q: I have been trying to establish a flowering meadow. There are lots of great flowers growing in the area but by summer they get crowded out and hidden by Johnson grass which I have been laboriously dealing with by hand. It always comes back. How do I get rid of it without killing the plants I want there? I have been working my 50' x 60' vegetable patch now for about three years. Initially it was all chest high Johnson grass. Just with digging and cutting off seed heads that grass is now gone from that area, so I'm telling myself it's not hopeless for my wildflower meadow as well.

A: 50' x 60' is a good-sized garden! You have done well to eliminate the Johnson Grass and maintain this garden by hand! Send us some pictures, we like garden success.

Penn State University has an good reference for eliminating Johnson grass at <https://extension.psu.edu/johnsongrass-and-shattercane-control-an-integrated-approach>.

If using herbicides, read and follow the directions on the label of the chemical you decide to use. When handling these chemicals, please use the proper protection (gloves, safety glasses, etc.) as directed by the chemical manufacturer.

If you want to stick with hand-pulling, there are some useful tools to save your shoulders and back. We encourage you to look for these tools at your local farm and garden stores and support local businesses.

Speaking of Master Gardener project gardens if you are interested in attracting pollinators in your meadow, come by the large pollinator garden we maintain at the Gray Fossil Site — Hands On! Discovery Center in Gray, their website: <https://visithandson.org/garden/>.

Master Gardeners have populated this garden with native plants that you may want to put in your meadow. Or visit the Tipton-Haynes Historical Site. Master Gardeners have two vegetable gardens and a large pollinator garden that we maintain there.

Master Gardeners also maintain other gardens in this area and the list can be found at our website under the projects and photo gallery tab at <http://www.netmga.net/>.

Happy gardening!