

Home & Garden

Little at Large

I VISITED a garden last week which had been redesigned and replanted three years ago and is now completely infested with mare's tail.

This horrendous weed had always been present but kept under control by digging it up and hoeing. That's until, to my horror, the professional doing the work had decided to run a rotary cultivator over the entire plot, with the disastrous result of chopping up the roots and multiply the weed. Mare's tail, like blindweed and groundelder, sprouts from every tiny bit of root remaining in the soil.

The roots can penetrate 25ft deep and the absence of large foliage makes it difficult even to spray, as the chemical tends to run off. It's an absolute nightmare and, like any other perennial weed, needs to be eliminated before considering any type of planting.

In this case it has, by now, established itself among most of the plants, leaving me with no alternative but to clear the whole area so that we can try to eradicate it. We will lift the plants and tease the rootballs apart, picking out any piece of mare's tail. Once cleaned they will be potted up and stored. Then we will let the mare's tail grow throughout the spring and summer and start a programme of spraying. I'll apply a



**Garden talk, by
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glyphosate-based weedkiller in late summer while growth is still green and before it starts turning yellow and dying back.

The weedkiller can take weeks to show any effect and total control may require several treatments in late summer over a period of two or three years. I've warned my clients they'll need patience and perseverance.

Never underestimate perennial weeds and if you are ignorant about the subject please get as much information as possible, before you ruin yours or someone else's garden.

**Happy gardening
Martin Little**