



## Readers' Questions Answered

Every week several readers email us with specific questions about plants and product. Each question is researched and an answer is promptly sent. Occasionally, a question comes along with such general relevance that it must be shared:

1. Products like Roundup and other herbicides -- How long do they last? If they freeze, will that kill their effectiveness? Do you have to take them to one of the toxic waste events the city has to get of some old stuff?

*Chemicals last many years. Time and freezing temperatures will decrease their effectiveness. It is a very good idea to take old unused herbicides to the toxic waste events for proper disposal. If the bottle is empty, it is acceptable to put in with regular trash but, as a courtesy to others, wrap in old newspaper.*

2. I've got some Bill's Rose Food but it is at least three years old. Still effective or do I need to buy new?

*I always recommend buying more – just kidding! Your fertilizer is still usable. Just break up any clumps that may have formed and use as directed. I keep my Bill's Rose Food in a Glad-lock type container with the instructions for use cut from the box taped to it. This way there's no chance of water getting in.*

3. Any of the other plant foods, like Miracle Grow. Still effective? (I just found a giant box of it.)

*I just cleaned my garage and – like you – found a large box too! It's fine to use. There may be a diminished effectiveness but this will only be slight. Go ahead and use it and monitor results. Fertilizer in a solid (non liquid) form will last much longer than liquid fertilizer.*

4. A neighbor gave me a shovel he used for shoveling coal, which I love for gardening. The handle is really old. Are there people who can replace the handle for me, or is it easier than I think it is?

*Yes. Shovel handles can be replaced. According to Ace Hardware on Central "there is a pin that holds the wooden handle into the shovel. Simply remove the pin. Insert new handle and new pin." They have the handles in stock and I'm sure they'd help you out if you took your old shovel in.*

5. How do you get rid of crab grass and also clover?

*This can be a summer long project and you may not succeed. My grandpa said the only way to get rid of crab grass was to "dig it out". He may not been far off. Bonide Weed Beater ® Plus Crabgrass and Broadleaf Weed Killer can be used. It is a liquid concentrate that you apply with a sprayer. Several applications will be needed. Spring applications are most effective before the grass goes to seed. Another option is to call a lawn weed control service and have them apply fertilizer and weed control every month.*

6. What's the best way to rid of cutworms?

*The best way depends on where the "critters" are located if in the Lawn use - Bayer ® Grub Control. If in the Garden use - Bayer® Multi Insect Control*

PS: If you set your 'season adjust' above 100% on your sprinkler system it's time to ratchet it back to 100%. 80 degree temperatures and cooler nights reduce the need for water almost immediately.

If you have a question, send me an email at [jim@gainans.com](mailto:jim@gainans.com).