

## Common broad-leaf weeds found in the “Peace and Plenty” garden:



**Broadleaf and narrowleaf plantain** grows in compacted or disturbed soils. The seeds of plantain are a common contaminant in cereal grain and other crop seeds. As a result, it now has a worldwide distribution as a naturalized species.



**Dandelions** are familiar tap-rooted plants. As the leaves grow outward, they push down the surrounding vegetation, such as grass in a lawn, killing the vegetation by cutting off the sunlight. The flower matures into a globe (clock) of fine filaments that are usually distributed by wind, carrying away the seed.



**Pigweed** is known by many names, including redroot pigweed, redroot amaranth, wild beet, and careless weed. When young, the leaves are edible in salads and the seeds can be used for flavoring in soups, stews and as a meal added to breads. This one is easy to miss and somehow is not seen till it is as big as the tomato plants!



**Lambsquarters** looks similar at first to pigweed. Leaves are light green, rounded, triangular, 1 to 10 inches long and on a long petiole. Roots are short and branched. The leaves and young shoots may be eaten as a leaf vegetable, either steamed or cooked like spinach, but should be eaten in moderation due to high levels of oxalic acid.



**Spotted spurge** is a low-growing summer annual broadleaf plant that often forms a dense mat. Spotted spurge inhabits agricultural lands and other disturbed areas. Spurge have a milky, sticky sap that can cause contact dermatitis in humans and animals. Small leaves are oblong to egg-shaped, often marked with a characteristic dark, reddish spot found midway down the center of the leaf vein, and sit atop short stalks. **Creeping spurge** leaves are not marked with a characteristic spot.



**Common Groundsel:** A summer annual with lobed leaves, yellow leaves and a white 'puff-ball' seedhead like that of dandelion. Stems are capable of rooting at the nodes. Leaves are arranged alternately along the stem, usually without hairs but occasionally with a few hairs. Leaves have deeply lobed margins. It has a taproot and a fibrous root system. Yellow flowers occur in clusters at the ends of stems.



**Purslane** is perhaps the most nutritious weed in the garden, containing alpha-linolenic acid, one of the highly sought-after Omega-3 fatty acids. Seedlings are egg-shaped to oblong, hairless, succulent (juicy-stemmed), and sometimes tinged red. Leaves are stalkless, or nearly so, and are opposite to one another along the stem. The mature plant grows prostrate to spreading, up to 3-1/3 ft in length, and has many succulent branches, starting from the base. Leaves are egg to spatula shaped, succulent, stalkless or have very short stalks, about 1/5 inches to 1-1/5 inches long, and sometimes their edges are red-tinged. Leaves are arranged either opposite one another or alternate along the stem. This plant is one I sometimes leave in the garden to shade the ground.

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**Ground Ivy (Creeping Charlie)** can be identified by its round to kidney- or fan-shaped, round-toothed edged opposed leaves attached to square stems which root at the nodes. It will form dense mats which can take over areas of lawn. Ground ivy has square stems and leaves which are attached in the center of the leaf. The flowers of ground ivy are funnel shaped, blue or lavender, and grow in clusters of 2 or 3 flowers on the upper part of the stem or near the tip. It usually flowers in the spring. We often find these in the herb and strawberry beds.



**Canada Thistle** is a perennial that spreads by seed and an underground system of vertical and horizontal roots. Canada thistle is diecious, which means male and female flowers occur on separate plants. Plants may be 3 to 5 feet tall, with glossy foliage on the upper surface and woolly on the lower leaf surface (this is reportedly one of the more variable characteristics). Leaves are alternately arranged, lobed, and armed with stiff spines. Canada thistle is known by several other common names: creeping thistle, small-flowered thistle, perennial thistle, and green thistle.



**Wood Sorrel**, also called yellow oxalis, sheep sorrel and yellow sourgrass. The leaflets are made up by three heart-shaped leaves, folded through the middle. The stalk is red/brown, and during the night or when it rains both flowers and leaves contract. The leaves, flowers, and bulbs can be eaten fresh or cooked. However, fresh leaves should be eaten only in moderation. The leaves and stem contain oxalic acid, which can cause poisoning if too much is eaten. Wood sorrel contains significant amounts of Vitamin A.



**Prickly Lettuce:** the plant we all love to hate. An annual or biennial weed with prickly leaves that emit a milky sap when cut. Young leaves are oval with spiny leaf margins and spines along the midvein of the lower leaf surface. Most leaves are distinctly lobed and have leaf bases that clasp the stem. All leaves have prickles that occur along the leaf margins and along the midvein on the lower leaf surfaces. It has a long taproot. Wear rubberized gloves when pulling! Don't let it go to seed! This one loves to grow along the building and bed edges.

### One of several grass weeds

**Goosegrass**, also called wiregrass, is an annual that grows as a compressed plant in turf. Leaves are distinctly



folded and may be smooth or have a few hairs. It tolerates compacted, dry areas and forms a pale green clump with flattened stems in a low rosette. Goosegrass has a strong, extensive root system and readily invades hard, compacted soils found in high traffic areas.

### A bothersome sedge



**Nutgrass** spreads quickly because of its fast-growing and hard-to-kill root system. Also called nutsedge, this noxious weed sprouts from underground tubers and rhizomes that grow in various directions within the soil. The rhizomes develop new, individual tubers that continue

their cycle of growth and also form a tuberous bulb when they reach the soil surface. The growth from one tuber has the ability to produce up to 1,900 new nutgrass plants and 7,000 new tubers, with each tuber carrying up to seven viable new buds.



## Common broad-leaf weeds found in the “Peace and Plenty” garden:



**Ladies Thumb** is an annual broadleaf weed that grows in moist soil, and often follows human disturbance. Ladies Thumb seeds are an important source of food for many songbirds, waterfowl, and mammals and its leaves provide cover for wildlife.

Mature plants often form large clumps. Leaves are lance to football shaped with a characteristic purplish blotch near the middle, and about 1 to 8 inches long. Pale smartweed, *P. lapathifolium*, and ladythumb look similar, but pale smartweed lacks the purple leaf blotch and short hairs on leaf sheaths that are characteristic in ladies thumb.

Small, pink, flowers densely cluster along erect terminal spikes that are about 1 inch long. Although similar in appearance, ladies thumb flowers are darker in color and do not droop as much as pale smartweed flowers. Flowers of the ladies thumb spike open; those of pale smartweed remain closed.



**Wild Lettuce**, *Lactuca virosa*, is a plant in the *Lactuca* (lettuce) genus, related to common lettuce (*L. sativa*), and is often called wild lettuce, bitter lettuce, laitue vireuse, opium lettuce, poisonous lettuce, tall lettuce, great lettuce or rakutu-karyumu-so.

It is biennial, similar to prickly lettuce *Lactuca serriola* but taller - it can grow to 6 ft. It is also stouter, the stem and leaves are more purple flushed, the leaves are less divided, but more spreading. It flowers from July until September.

Some people add the greens to salads, though the leaves of *L. virosa* are more bitter than other salad greens.



**Pilewort** is called burnweed, American burnweed, or fireweed. It is usually the first plant to appear in land which has been disturbed, damaged by logging or burned over, and that is, of course, where the name, fireweed, originated.

Pilewort is an annual, seeds germinating in the spring, and grows rapidly to a height, in some soils, of as much as ten feet. It blooms heavily, but the flowers, like the plant, can only be described as ugly. The blossoms are about a half inch long and covered with green bracts. There are no petals or ray florets, and the disk florets are whitish, not really discernable as flowers to the naked eye and protrude only about one sixteenth of an inch from the bracts. Flowers are followed rapidly by white, feathery seed heads covering the entire crown of the plant, and the seeds are widely disbursed by the wind via a "parachute" circlet of fine hairs much like cottonwood seeds.

Interestingly, pilewort has long been known for its value in folk medicine. American Indians made a tea from the leaves of the plant to treat many ailments such as cystitis, diarrhea, and dropsy. Pilewort is an efficient seed producer and must be diligently removed at all stages of its growth.



**Never put seed-filled weeds into the compost bins. Please put them in the metal trash can, or better yet, into the dumpster. Ideally, you would also bag these up first.**