(Weedicides is a substance used to kill unwanted plants. Selective weedicides kill specific targets while leaving the desired crop relatively unharmed. Some of these act by interfering with the growth of the weed and are often synthetic "imitations" of plant hormones. Chemicals, used for killing or inhibiting the growth of higher plants, are called weedicides. Weedicides can be classified depending on their mode of action, relative time of application and chemical)

Weeds have never been noted for their host of friends; now they have lethal enemies. These are chemical killers that promise a turn in the tide of battle against plant pests of lawn and golf course, pasture and farm. They hold up a light of hope to the legion of hay fever sufferers, sound doom for poison ivy, and point to a black future for a long list of noxious weeds that cost the farmer many millions and the home owner much grief. While the millennium has not yet arrived, and you cannot dash out and blithely spray vegetable garden and flower border with the new chemical weedicides with assurance that nothing but weeds will suffer, the killers will help.

Hand and hoe will still be needed, but there is still plenty of cheer in the news about the interesting group of chemical weed swatters. Chiefly in the spotlight stands 2,4-Dichlorophcnloxvacetic acid, shortened, for obvious reasons, to 2,4-D. Weed killers are, of course, not new. Such things as common salt, calcium chloride, crude oil, coal tar and various strong chemicals have been used for many years. Flamethrowers have been pressed into service against weeds. But only recently have selective weed killers been developed to the point of safety for public use, and 2,4-D heads the list.

A Cornell University research worker at the New York State Experiment Station was seeking a nemesis for bindweed, which costs the farmer millions annually. He found it, and controlled experiments followed, proving that 2,4-D does a pretty good job of picking its enemies, killing some plants and not injuring others. Among the plants that are immune to the chemical are most members of the grass family. Those that succumb include most of the weeds common to lawns, among them wild garlic, plantain and dandelion. It is interesting to note that 2,4-D is not a poison in the usual sense. In fact, it is one of the so-called synthetic plant hormones. Used in weak solution, it will produce tomatoes without pollination--seedless tomatoes.

Similar hormones are used to cause cuttings to take root. It is, however, not the best hormone to use for that purpose. Just what 2,4-D does to weeds is still a subject of varied interpretations. It does not, however, merely burn off the top of a weed plant and kill immediately. It is more insidious than that, apparently upsetting the whole mechanism of the plant, giving it a false sense of well being. The weed takes on a sudden vigor, but this is only temporary, for it soon begins to distort, disintegrate and die, roots and all. So 2,4-D still holds some mysteries, and it is not yet to be sprayed willy-nilly around your vegetable patch or flower border, because it will kill useful plants; generally speaking, most broadleaf plants.

<http://www.krishiworld.com/html/weed_control1.html>