

If you are one of the many Moabites who has a garden, then by this point in the summer you are probably enjoying the fruits of your labors. But while planting season may be over, garden maintenance can still be a full-time job. And a big part of that job is weeding.

There is a common misconception that weeds need to be thrown in the trash and can't be composted. This is largely untrue. Though there are certain precautions you need to take as a gardener, most weeds can be recycled back into the soil through composting.

Many people worry that by putting weeds in with the rest of their compost they will be planting weeds in the spring, when they put the compost in their garden. Here are a few simple tips that will allow you to keep all the nutrients in those weeds in your garden without having to worry about doubling your weeding next year:

1) Make sure to hot compost

All this means is that you need to turn over your compost regularly. By circulating the biological material you will be ensuring that the bacteria that produces the compost gets all the nutrients and oxygen that it needs to work at full capacity. The more active the bacteria is, the more heat it generates as a byproduct. That heat is enough to kill the majority of weed seeds.

However, a lot of gardens do more passive composting. The following tips will help if you are one of them!

2) Don't compost weeds that have gone to seed

If you are pulling out weeds that have already gone to seed, do not put them in your compost pile. If you do, those seeds will sit in there, biding their time, until you spread the compost over your garden. Once that happens the seeds will get the air, warmth, and soil that they need to start growing and will cause problems in your garden. If the weeds have gone to seed, just throw them in the trash.

3) Don't compost weeds that send out runners

Some of the more voracious weeds, like raspberry canes, witchgrass and dock will send out runners. These runners -long, vine-like appendages- can keep growing in your compost heap. If you pull out a weed with a long root that attaches itself to other plants, then don't compost it.

HOWEVER, you can solarize weeds that have runners and then safely compost them. All you need to do is put the weeds in a black trash bag then leave that out in the sun in a corner of your garden for a few months until they are good and dead.

Got any other tips for gardening in the desert? Share your knowledge and post it to Moonflower's Facebook page!