Agricultural Department

Alternative Weeding Methods

Flame weeding between rows of sweet corn

Flame Weeding

Using a flame weeder, propane is ignited, and the flame is held over weeds for about 2 seconds with the nozzle 1-2 inches above the weeds, heating the plant tissue long enough the kill the weed. Keep the nozzle 6 inches away from crops to avoid scorching them. It is important to remain attentive to avoid injury. Flame weeding also should not be done during periods of high fire danger. This method works best in-between crops that have large spacing (like corn, squash and pumpkins), or for large empty areas around garden plots. Flame weeders can be purchased for approximately $300.

Landscaping Fabric

Before planting crops, holes are cut in the spaces where you would like to plant your seeds (reference sheet A-2). Individual spacing varies on crop type. Larger crops need larger holes and spacing (like squash, zucchini, and tomatoes) and smaller crops need smaller holes and spacing (peppers, lettuce, beans, and peas). The fabric is fastened to the soil using landscape staples. The fabric coverage between the holes prevents weeds from growing and proves to be a highly effective means of weed control. Landscaping fabric can be bought from any gardening center or on the internet.

Beans and cucumbers growing in landscape fabric

SARE
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education