



AGROECOLOGY FOR WEEDS

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AGROECOLOGICAL WEED MANAGEMENT REPOSITORY

The Agroecological Weed Management (AWM) Repository

<https://www.goodhorizon.eu/platform/awm-practices/>

is a virtual space where you can freely and openly find information and educational material on current and agroecological weed management practices in the European Union. You can browse and learn about several weed management practices and crops.

The **Agroecological Weed Management (AWM) Toolbox**, our Decision Support System that supports the user to reduce the use of synthetic herbicides and/or improve weed management by combining different Agroecological Weed Management (AWM) strategies with cover crops is LIVE!

<https://dss.goodhorizon.eu/>



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HAND WEEDING

DESCRIPTION & BENEFITS

Hand weeding is a manual weed management practice involving the physical removal of weeds by hand or using handheld tools. This traditional method is the most ancient weed management practice and:

- **remains an effective way** to control weeds in various agricultural systems (e.g., organic farms, smallholder family farms)
- **is often selected in situations where mechanical or chemical control methods are impractical or environmentally non-sustainable**
- **offers targeted weed removal and minimizes disturbance to crops**

STRENGTHS



- Improved labor opportunities, supporting rural livelihoods and communities
- Environmentally friendly practice, reducing reliance on synthetic herbicides and minimizing environmental impacts
- Precise and effective removal of weeds while minimizing damage to crops

WEAKNESSES



- Labor-intensive and time-consuming, leading to higher operational costs and reduced efficiency compared to mechanized practices
- Limited availability of skilled labor, particularly in regions facing demographic shifts or rural abandonment
- Risk of repetitive strain injuries and occupational health hazards for workers engaged in manual weeding activities

OPPORTUNITIES



- Promotion of agroecological principles (i.e., human and social values, co-creation and sharing of knowledge)
- Training and educational opportunities for farmers, agricultural workers and youth
- Facilitation of community engagement and social cohesion through collective weed management efforts and agricultural cooperatives

THREATS



- Vulnerability to fluctuations in labor availability and costs, particularly during peak agricultural seasons or in times of economic uncertainty
- Risk of non-compliance with labor regulations or ethical standards, particularly in regions with inadequate labor protections
- Competition with cheaper labor alternatives or mechanized weed management practices, leading to reduced demand for hand weeding and labor



TIPS

- **equip the workers with the right tools** (e.g., hoes, or other handheld tools)
- **identify the weed species** that are present in the agricultural field and design carefully the timing of application(s) to prevent regrowth of certain weeds and achieve a desired effect
- **train the workers** to avoid unintentional damage to crops (e.g., precise weed removal to avoid damaging the crop roots)
- **act as early as possible** to manage the weeds in the early stages of growth to give advantage to crops
- **be aware that hand weeding is time-consuming, labor-intensive and often costly**
- **ensure and respect human and workers rights** (e.g., for safety)

LIABILITY DISCLAIMER

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