

A twist of fate

A dangerous cloud is drifting across many gardens in North Dakota this summer. Gardeners have been shocked to discover their vines stretched and distorted into freakish shapes.

What would cause this?

The culprit is 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D), the most common herbicide used to kill broadleaf weeds in lawns.

We have to be extremely careful using 2,4-D during the heat of summer. Even if we spray on a calm day and use a large spray droplet, the chemical can still volatilize and drift onto our garden plants.

Tomatoes, potatoes, and grapes are extremely sensitive. Affected vines become distorted and the leaves cup upwards. The veins in the leaves become raised and very pronounced. Symptoms are especially severe on the younger leaves.

Once the vines are exposed, we can only wait to see if the vines can outgrow the problem.

In the future, avoid using herbicides on the lawn in summer. It is much better to wait and use herbicides in September after temperatures cool off. This is when the herbicides are most effective at killing weeds in the lawn and least likely to damage our vegetable gardens. *DG*



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Published September 2010
Revised October 2011