

## Using the term 'superweed' in GMO debate is misleading

*Superweeds* have been in [been in the news a lot](#) over the last few months. Most of the recent coverage has been related to new 2,4-D resistant crops that were recently [approved by the USDA](#) and the new herbicide formulation (2,4-D plus glyphosate) that the EPA is reviewing. The Genetic Literacy Project's [Marc Brazeau recently wrote a compelling piece](#) arguing that our focus on *superweeds* in GMO crops draws attention away from solutions that could really help make modern agriculture more sustainable.

The Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) is announcing a [new fact sheet](#) that addresses some of the most common misconceptions related to *superweeds*. [*Full disclosure, I helped develop the WSSA fact sheet, and am quoted in the accompanying press release from WSSA.*] I encourage anyone who's interested in weed management or herbicide-resistant crops to go download and read this [2-page document](#). But more importantly, I hope that anyone **writing about *superweeds*** will check out this resource to avoid contributing to these misconceptions.

I wanted to provide some of my thoughts here on why I think using the word *superweed* has actually contributed to misunderstandings about herbicide-resistant weeds and GMO herbicide-resistant crops.

In reality, the *superweeds* in most recent news articles aren't really any different than the herbicide-resistant weeds we've been [battling for 50 years](#). That doesn't mean herbicide-resistant weeds aren't a problem, quite the contrary. But it isn't **because** they are resistant that they are problematic; weeds are problematic because they grow tall, they are aggressive, they damage harvest equipment, they produce a lot of seeds, etc. Weeds, in general, are pretty super. And they possess these traits whether they are herbicide-resistant or not. Herbicide-resistance simply removes one powerful tool out of the many we use to control weeds.

If we really want to have a rational discussion about the impact of weeds, resistance to herbicides, GMO crops, or herbicide use, it is counter-productive to continue using a term that only creates more confusion about all of these things. It would be nice if we could stop using the term *superweed*, and instead just say what we mean. Because after all, in nearly all cases, a ~~superweed~~ **vigorous weed** was already a ~~superweed~~ **difficult to control** before it became a ~~superweed~~ **herbicide resistant**, and it probably isn't even a ~~superweed~~ **crop-weed hybrid**.

**Read full original article:** Superweeds: A Mutating Problem