

Open letter to Consumer Reports: Organic alternatives to glyphosate not necessarily safer

Dear Consumer Reports,

In the article Beat Those Weeds (Which was, somewhat ironically, published in the YOUR ADVOCATE section of your June 2015 magazine) you list clove oil as a useful treatment to kill the cut stumps of barberry and kudzu (you do note for one of these plants that repeat applications may be necessary). As someone who has tested clove oil products, I can assure you that trying to use these products to kill the root systems of these weeds is an exercise in futility. Clove oil is a contact poison that kills what it touches. It is not systemic and will not kill the whole plant because a cut end is treated. Roundup is a systemic and will work this way.

I certainly understand wanting to avoid Roundup. I am fully aware of its recent designation as a probable carcinogen. I wonder why you couldn't provide some more realistic information on how well your recommendations were likely to work, or offer some better organic remedies such as digging out the root systems of these plants (which is, admittedly, a tough job).

Sure, clove oil is organic, but it is composed primarily (usually 70-90%) of eugenol, a naturally occurring chemical. Have you ever checked out the MSDS for eugenol? It is classified as a carcinogen by Registry of Toxic Effects of Chemical Substances. Not only that, its acute toxicity is generally considered to be higher than that of glyphosate (the active ingredient in Roundup) and doses as low as 5-10 ml have caused near fatal reactions in children.

Please Consumer Reports, if you're going to protect us from Roundup, then have the decency to avoid recommending products that can potentially have effects that are similar or even worse, despite the fact that they are organic. Organic does not necessarily mean safe. Thought and discretion on the part of the consumer are still required, especially when products intended to kill or injure living organisms are being recommended.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [An Open Letter to Consumer Reports](#)