

## Stay the course – finish the job

There is a specific weed in many of the gardens surrounding the house and barns that is not affected by normal weed killing sprays. It also does not die after one treatment but rather requires several repeat applications approximately a week apart. With the wind and the weather conditions here at Everwind Ranch, it is virtually impossible for me to keep such a schedule and thus it seems I am always losing battles with this enemy. At times I make good progress and get quite encouraged, but since I haven't yet eradicated them all, they come back and multiply once again. Sometimes I get very discouraged, feeling I am fighting a war I cannot win.

I had a short window of opportunity this morning to spray them once again. As I moved from garden to garden and saw the effects of the previous spraying I was encouraged to realize some of the weed had indeed been killed. Unfortunately, I was discouraged to see how much new growth had begun to take over at the same time. I began to think of the entire process as one of battles, individually fought, with the final outcome of the war still undecided. I am more determined than ever to win this war and eliminate this overbearing nuisance once and for all.

As I thought about my situation, my mind was drawn to the Israelites - specifically of when God told them to completely wipe out the enemy in the Promised Land. At times they were lax and didn't fully follow His orders and allowed some of the people to live for various reasons. Did they not totally believe Him or did they not see merit in His orders? At any rate, they did not obey and follow His instructions.

What happened there is the same thing that is happening to my gardens with this stubborn weed. Because I have not totally wiped them out, they stubbornly continue to rebound and reproduce, causing me all sorts of problems. Left alone, they would obliterate my gardens entirely, bringing them to ruin. It was the same with the Israelites. The people they left living in the land ultimately caused all sorts of harm as they led many of the children of God astray into their pagan ways. Many did all sorts of ungodly acts – things such as worshiping idols, even other gods, going so far as offering children as sacrifices to them - things that ultimately destroyed many of them along with their entire families.

Often there are things in our lives that, left unattended to continue to grow and/or reproduce, can cause us great harm – things that can destroy relationships, cause bodily harm, and keep us from experiencing God's best in our lives – prevent us from fulfilling the very purpose for which we were created. One needs to be so careful to obey His instructions. God's commands are always mandates that are necessary for our protection and well-being – never to cause us hurt or harm us in anyway. He can be trusted as He always has our good in mind.

*Jeremiah 29:11: "I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*