It is probable that for many years practical farmers have made various efforts to destroy weeds by means of the application of chemical substances. For example, common salt has been used for years by farmers in strong applications upon the soil, about the roots of quack-grass, elder-bushes, and various shrubs which they have been anxious to eliminate. Salt and other chemicals, especially sodium arsenate, have been used by landscape gardeners and other persons for destroying weeds in walks and driveways. This has been done by the use of the dry powdered chemicals sprinkled between the paving stones and bricks and along the margins of drives. It has been possible in this way to prevent the encroachment of grass and other weedy growths.

As a boy I once met an English gardener who claimed that copper sulfate scattered beneath the furrow slice is a sure destroyer of weed seeds, and that the crop following would not be injured thereby.