

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

2023 Dicamba Training Resources

There are a couple of herbicides in Kansas requiring additional training beyond the private and/or commercial pesticide applicator licensing requirements outlined in last week's column. Paraquat (paraquat dichloride) is one. There's also the restricted use dicamba containing products Engenia, XtendiMax, or Tavium with VaporGrip, where we'll focus this week.

The labels of the aforementioned dicamba products outline annual training requirements. Even if trained previously, all applicators must complete dicamba or auxin-specific training prior to purchase/use of these products in the 2023 growing season. Product labels state formulations are for *retail sale to and use only by* certified applicators. In Kansas, this means everyone purchasing/using these products has to obtain a private (application to agricultural lands owned or operated by individual) or commercial (applicators applying to other people's land for compensation) applicator license *and* complete the annual training requirements.

If you have been applying under someone else's license you will need to get your own if you are applying these products. If someone has been applying for you under your license, they, too must meet the requirements for application of the restricted use dicamba products, namely completion of an approved dicamba training and holding either a private or commercial applicator license. Training opportunities are available (in multiple formats) as follows:

BASF: <https://www.engeniaherbicide.com/training.html>

Bayer/Monsanto: <https://www.roundupreadyxtend.com/stewardship/Pages/default.aspx>

Syngenta: <https://www.syngenta-us.com/herbicides/tavium-application-stewardship>

NOTE: drop me a line at dhallaue@ksu.edu if you want web addresses e-mailed to you.

Pruning Overgrown Apple Trees

It's been said the best pruning cut for an overgrown apple tree is at ground level. What if you really want to save it, though? The answer: start slowly and be realistic. You can only remove no more than 30 percent of the tree in one year, so being patient is key.

After removing dead wood (it doesn't count toward the 30 percent), start removing suckers at the tree's base. Then, choose six of the best branches to keep as scaffold branches and remove the others (good candidates for removal include those with narrow crotch angles). Make cuts flush to the branch collar and do not paint wounds – they'll heal more quickly if left alone. If you've reached the 30 percent threshold, stop for the year and pick up again next year.

If you still have room to prune, thin back branches on each scaffold branch, removing crowded branches and opening up the tree to light and reducing the potential for humidity issues. When you are through, the tree should have enough area removed so a softball can be thrown it.

When you prune severely, you'll likely cause the tree to produce vigorous side shoots from the trunk (suckers) and main branches will produce water sprouts. While one of the more time consuming and difficult practices necessary to bring an overgrown apple tree back into shape, this pruning is key to tree survival and production. Remove suckers/sprouts throughout the growing season so the tree's center stays open (waiting until spring will only stimulate the tree to produce more).