

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Multi-stemmed Brush Species – Roughleaf Dogwood

A couple of weeks ago, I referenced buckbrush management. A second multi-stemmed species of concern for us in our perennial forage systems is Roughleaf Dogwood.

One of the challenges with a roughleaf dogwood control program is how much later it comes on than buckbrush. Buckbrush gets to its optimum control window earlier than dogwood, which often doesn't exhibit its flat-topped clusters of white flowers until late May or early June. In native grass pastures with regular burning, fire can keep it from getting started (see some Konza Prairie control differences in this week's First Friday Forage Focus on our Meadowlark Extension District Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Meadowlarkextensiondistrict>). In cool season forage stands, or unburned warm season prairies, dogwood becomes difficult to remove once established.

Herbicide applications can be effective from the flower bud stage through early seed production. Many common herbicide active ingredients have *some* activity – but seldom result in what we'd consider great control. In fact, research with single active ingredient products like triclopyr or dicamba or picloram, even in combination with 2,4-D, seldom result in mortalities greater than 25 percent. Even 'good' control isn't great, with high volume treatments of multiple active ingredient products resulting in around 50 percent control. Single applications, even of multiple active ingredient products, likely won't eliminate roughleaf dogwood in a single year, instead requiring a multi-year effort, possibly in combination with prescribed fire.

Herbicides may damage desirable grasses under the right conditions and all of the herbicides above will do significant damage to desirable legumes and other broadleaf forbs in forage stands. *Always* read and follow label directions prior to application. For additional information on rates/timings/products, request a copy of (or link to...) the 2024 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide available through any District Office.

Ross Mosteller
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

Time to Turn Out, Are You Ready?

Hay piles tend to get low this time of year, animals are reaching through fences to nibble green grass shoots on the other side and producers might be growing tired of the chore of feeding. All this signals that spring is here and “turn out time” isn’t far away, especially on our cool season pastures. Some recent rains make it seem like we might have grass, but are you, the livestock and most importantly - the pasture, ready? Let’s take a look today at planning checklist for this busy time of year.

The green grass and high market prices may make it seem like an attractive option to put as many animals as possible out on new tender growth. Is that the best choice long-term for the operation? Do you have a business plan? Grazing plan? Livestock health and management plan? It can be very tempting to get “grass fever” and divert from well thought out plans, especially with the outlook for good market prices on the backside of the grazing season. If you find yourself there, take a moment to reflect on the plans, remember you are operating a business, and ask yourself the following:

- What is the plan for weed/brush control, fertilizer, grazing management and proper pasture management to insure the grazing system stays ahead of grazing pressure for plant benefits?
- What is your planned stocking rate? Will forage production be expected to match that rate this year or is adjustment needing to be considered?
- Do you have a plan for drought, reduced forage production or water systems issues and have planned alternate locations for the livestock?
- Have risk management tools for forage and livestock production been put in place, such as PRF or LRP? If you haven’t looked at these tools, think about them prior to sign-up deadlines.
- Is there a component of the livestock operation that can be rotated to different forages, moved to dry lot or marketed early?
- Has an adequate rest period been planned for the plant recovery to build carbohydrate root reserves? Planning rest may be more important than planning grazing!
- What is the harvested forage and/or feed plan for next winter? Do you know how many days you need to be grazing and subsequently feeding supplemental feed with these inventories?
- Has the flock/herd been given pre-breeding vaccinations and been treated for parasites?
- Will the livestock be in adequate Body Condition for the onset of breeding season? If not, does supplemental feed exist to get them into proper condition or should breeding be delayed?
- Are replacement females at a proper age and target weight to breed up quickly?
- Have the breeding males undergone a Breeding Soundness Exam and ready physically?
- Is ample sire power on hand to cover all the females early in the breeding season? Do you have a plan if there aren’t enough breeding males or if injuries occur?
- Should artificial insemination be part of your operation, do you have semen and supplies needed to synchronize estrus and efficiently AI?

This isn’t a comprehensive list by any means, but are good points to think about if you haven’t yet. This is the time of year and a good market year, when it is easy to get excited and have much optimism about the livestock business. It is also time to be planning for the future and keeping the business poised for economic sustainability into that future.

Laura Phillips
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

Henbit and Chickweed in your Lawn

Do you have weeds popping up in your lawn this spring? You might be looking at henbit or chickweed. The plant with the little purple flowers that have been showing up in home lawns is henbit. If you are not sure this is what you have, check the stems. If they are square rather than round, you have henbit. A plant that also is low growing but has round stems and tiny white flowers is chickweed.

Both these plants are winter annuals and start to grow in the fall. They spend the winter as small plants, so we do not usually pay much attention to them until they start to flower in the spring. Trying to kill either one at this time of the year with an herbicide typically is a waste of time and money. Though plants may be burned back, they will rarely be killed.

So, what should you do? Remember, these are winter annuals that will die as soon as the weather turns hot. In the spring, its best to keep the lawn mowed until nature takes its course.

However, you can do something this fall that will help for next spring. There are two possible courses of action, as far as chemical controls go. The first is to apply a preemergence herbicide in early to mid-September. This will prevent henbit and other winter annuals from germinating. Preemergence herbicides labeled for both henbit and chickweed include prodiamine (Barricade), dithiopyr (Dimension), isoxaben (Gallery), pendimethalin (Halts and others), oryzalin (Surflan and Weed Impede) and XL. All but Surflan, Weed Impede and XL are also labeled for speedwell.

The second course of action is to wait until late October or early November (after most henbit has germinated) and use a postemergence broadleaf herbicide, such as those mentioned above. With this approach, most of the henbit will be killed but, because small numbers of henbit continue to germinate through the late fall and winter, some plants will be missed. This approach works well because henbit is relatively easy to kill in the fall and many people want to treat for dandelions at that time (i.e., October) anyway. Just remember you will have to do some spot-spraying in the spring if you want to get all the henbit.

As a final note, henbit will not be very competitive in dense, healthy lawns, so good cultural management will reduce the need for herbicides.

Teresa Hatfield
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

Don't Hand Off Cash to Social Security Agents

In today's world, scammers are becoming increasingly sophisticated. It is getting harder to detect what is legitimate and what is a scam. As technology changes, so do scams, but they generally have one thing in common: preying on unsuspecting people. Scammers target specific groups of people more often than others. The groups that seem to be the most targeted are seniors, service members, veterans, immigrants, and students. Because of this continuing threat, we must stay alert and aware of what is happening around us.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of the Inspector General has seen recent activity in which people have impersonated SSA agents. These scammers have been targeting older adults by phone or email, claiming to be SSA agents. They try to scare victim by saying their Social Security number is compromised. From here, they use different tactics to convince the victim that they are legitimate. They may ask for personal information, such as your Social Security number, bank account information, or other personal information, assuming they need it for their investigation.

The phony agents will request you meet to hand off cash in person. Please remember that Social Security Agents will never request that you hand off cash, checks, or gift cards. This new scam is more brazen because it asks people to hand off cash directly to them. This situation is very dangerous; you are putting yourself in direct physical danger. These scammers are playing on people's fears of not wanting to get into trouble with federal agencies.

You should be suspicious of unsolicited contact from people who claim they are from government agencies. Do not provide any personal or financial information over the phone to anyone with whom you did not initiate contact. If you are concerned about the caller, hang up and verify the call through a legitimate source. Do not rely on the person calling you to give the correct callback number; seek information through official government channels. "This is the latest example of how scammers are constantly evolving their tactics to intimidate or pressure people into making hasty decisions that usually involve stealing their target's hard-earned money," said Inspector General Gail S. Ennis. "While our agents are out in the field, they will not ask you for money. I urge you not to respond to these kinds of requests."

If you believe you have been a victim of this or any other scam, you must report it. Call your local police and file a police report. You will also want to report this to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at ic3.gov and the Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General (SSA OIG) at oig.ssa.gov. To report other scams, contact the Federal Trade Commission at ftc.gov. You will also need to take steps to protect your personal and financial information. The Federal Trade Commission has a list of steps to protect yourself; visit their website at www.ftc.gov.

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No article this week.