

Meadowlark District Extension News
September 4, 2015

David G. Hallauer, District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Woody Plant Control – Basal Bark Applications

This time of year provides an excellent opportunity for the treatment of unwanted woody species. One such option is the use of what's known as basal bark applications.

Basal bark treatments are single tree applications for labeled species less than four to six inches in diameter where the herbicide mix can be applied from the soil line upwards to cover the bottom 12-15 inches of stems or trunks. The entire circumference of the trunk must be completely wetted on all side with a triclopyr-diesel mixture.

For Remedy Ultra, mix the product in a ratio of 20-30% Remedy Ultra with the remainder diesel. Pathfinder II is a ready-to-use product and does not have to be mixed with diesel. PastureGard HL is a premix of triclopyr and fluroxypyr, and can be applied as a basal bark or cut-stump treatment as a 25% solution in diesel. Crossbow, a mixture of triclopyr and 2,4-D, can also provide control of certain woody plants as a 4% solution in diesel. Milestone, with the active ingredient aminopyralid, is effective on black and common honeylocust. Mix Milestone 5% v/v with a compatible basal oil.

If the woody plant is greater than six inches in diameter – you'd better go a different route and cut them off at the ground! Next week, we'll discuss cut stump applications for those situations.

Dividing Peonies

There are few gardeners that don't appreciate the low maintenance, beautiful spring display peony. That's why it might be helpful to know that they can be divided to increase your planting! When? Now!

Start by removing old foliage since they are dormant now. Dig out the entire plant. Shake and wash off as much soil as possible to expose the plant's pink buds or 'eyes'. Use a sharp knife (the roots are tough!) to cut the roots into separate pieces, making sure each division has three to four buds.

Pick a location that receives at least a half day of full sun with the more sun the better!. Space plants so there is at least two feet between dwarf types and four feet between standard types. Plant, making sure that the pink buds are about an inch below the soil surface. Deeper than two inches and flowering may be delayed or completely prevented. Firm the soil often around the plant to prevent settling. Water in well after planting and water as necessary through the fall and winter to keep the soil moist.

It's a good idea to mulch new plantings to prevent heaving from our freeze/thaw cycles. Add a mulch of straw, leaves, compost or other material after the soil freezes as well. Keep in mind, however, that peonies often take about three years to return to full bloom and size after division.