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Roughleaf Dogwood Control

Often dismissed as plum thicket or other brush species from a distance, Roughleaf dogwood continues to spread across our grassland acres in northeast Kansas – often at an alarming rate! As it does, grazing acreage continues to be lost, particularly along fence rows, tree edges, and streambanks.

Roughleaf dogwood is typically controlled via controlled burning regimens or chemical control. Prescribed burning works best in warm season grass environments due to the frequency with which we can burn them and not cause stand damage. Even burned regularly, the growth cycle of dogwood often allows it to escape control from fire after it becomes established. For cool season grass stands, herbicide applications are our best bet.

Roughleaf dogwood should soon be in full bloom. Check stands now to initiate control programs between the flower bud state and early seed production for optimum control. This time frame corresponds to increasing food reserves in the root/crown of the species.

Roughleaf dogwood is tough to control! Our common foliar-applied herbicides like Remedy Ultra, Banvel, and Tordon 22K – whether used alone or in combination with 2, 4-D - will defoliate Roughleaf dogwood, but seldom kill more than 25%. According to KSU Range Management Specialist Dr. Walt Fick, higher kill rates require the use of high-volume treatments that include 1% PastureGard (triclopyr + fluroxypyr), 1% Surmount (picloram + fluroxypyr), and 1% Grazon P+D + 0.5% Remedy Ultra (picloram + 2, 4-D + triclopyr) – all with adequate water and a suitable non-ionic surfactant. Multiple applications will likely be required.

For a list of use rate recommendations, contact your District Office for a copy of the 2016 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide.

Thinning Excess Fruit

It's difficult to think about our free trees producing 'too much', but that can indeed be the case in heavy fruit years. Is that the case in your orchard? Might be a good time to check it out!

If you find that fruit set is especially heavy, thinning may be in order. Failure to do so can result in multiple problems. For starters, heavy fruit set can interfere with fruit bud development this summer that can compromise the crop next year (apples are the worst!). Thinning also helps producer larger fruit from this year's crop. Too much fruit results in smaller fruit size. Limb damage is a third concern that can actually result in broken branches if fruit set is heavy enough.

Knowing proper fruit spacing is therefore an important aspect of our orchard management. Keep apples and pears four to six inches apart. Peaches need to be six to eight inches apart, but apricots can be as close as two to four inches between fruit. Thin plums and prunes to four to five inches apart. Leave cherries alone!

Failure to thin may not be a problem at all – or it can lead to serious damage tree damage. Erring on the side of thinning the crop not only helps with tree health, but fruit size as well.