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Basal Bark Treatments for Brush Control

Brush management in pastures typically centers on foliar treatments. Unfortunately, brush size, equipment, weather conditions, and other issues can inhibit those programs, leaving producers looking for other alternatives. Fortunately, late summer and fall provide a window for two such programs: basal bark and cut stump treatments.

Basal bark control programs consist of treating scattered stands of individual trees (less than four to six inches in diameter) from the soil line to a stem height of 12-15 inches – the 'basal' area of the tree. For best results, be sure to apply down to the soil line.

Triclopyr is the active ingredient most recommended for basal bark programs (and works well for cut stump treatments, too – more on that next week!). It can be found in Remedy Ultra, Pathfinder II and PastureGard HL. While Pathfinder II is a ready to use product, Remedy Ultra and PastureGard HL will require mixing with 20-30% diesel fuel. Always read and follow label guidelines! Milestone contains the active ingredient aminopyralid and is effective on black and common honeylocust in a one to five percent solution with a compatible basal oil.

Brush control season isn't over just yet! Consider a basal bark treatment this fall on smaller trees. Next week, we'll talk mixtures for cut stump treatment of larger trees.

More Turf! Overseeding Your Lawn

Summer can thin our turfgrass stands for various reasons: traffic, drought, etc... If your stand is a little thin, overseeding time is upon us!

Start by mowing the grass short – to a height of one to one and a half inches - and removing clippings. This will increase seed-soil contact and increase the amount of light reaching young seedlings (this is the only time you get to mow short!!)

Next, evaluate thatch levels. A quarter inch of thatch is excellent. If it's three quarters of an inch or more, consider removal with a sod cutter and starting over. A power rake can be used to reduce a thatch layer that is less than three quarters of an inch but more than a quarter inch.

Prepare for seeding by roughing up small spots with a rake prior to seeding. For larger areas, consider a verticut machine, slit seeder, or core aerator. The verticutter has solid vertical blades set to cut furrows in the soil. A slit seeder combines soil preparation and seeding since it is a verticut machine with a seed hopper. The holes punched in - and removed from - the soil by a core aerator will allow an excellent environment for seed germination and growth, plus it helps with water infiltration, reduces compaction, and increase soil oxygen. Make three to four passes with the core aerator to ensure enough holes for the seed.

Fertilize according to a soil test using a starter fertilizer and water if needed.