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Multi-stemmed Brush Species – Buckbrush

The first brush species we typically see in spring is an invasive species known as bush honeysuckle. It's an issue, but not so much in pasture or rangeland. One that *is* an early season issue, however, is buckbrush (coralberry). These native perennial spreads mostly via runners, with plants eventually forming dense patches and shading out desirable forage species. Control will require multiple years, and maybe multiple approaches as well.

If using a controlled burn or mechanical removal (mowing, goats, etc...), removal of top growth after plants have leafed out (when root carbohydrate levels are at their lowest) can be effective since it requires the plant to 'start from scratch'. Over time, this can weaken plants and make them less competitive. Burning can be effective in warm season grass stands but is more difficult in brome/fescue because a) we don't (and shouldn't) burn as frequently and b) the timing of cool season grass burns does little to defoliate buckbrush to the level needed for control. It's often mid-April before buckbrush leaf's out – well after we should have burned cool season stands (cool season grasses also don't handle well the multiple years of burning that would be required to do much against buckbrush). If you want to integrate mowing into the mix, consider an early to mid-May timeframe. Again, multiple years of mowing will be required.

If herbicides are used, timing is important as well. The best application window occurs just as the leaves start to transition from light to dark green color, confirming that low point in the nonstructural carbohydrate cycle. Numerous herbicides are labelled for buckbrush control with several 2,4-D LVE formulations typically effective at a relatively economical rate. If you're after other weed/brush species as well, consider combination products with additional active ingredients like picloram (restricted use), triclopyr, aminopyralid, etc...

Herbicides *may* damage desirable grasses under the right conditions and any of the previously mentioned herbicides can do *significant* damage to desirable legumes and broadleaf forbs in the stand. *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 or e-mail to dhallaue@ksu.edu .