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Brush Control Using Cut Stump Treatments

In last week's column, the basal bark method of brush control was discussed. It's a great alternative to foliar control to control brush standing, often extending our control season and potentially increasing control. It has limitations, however, one of which is plant diameter. If brush is greater than six inches in diameter, you're probably better off cutting it at ground level and treating the surface of the cut, a method known as cut stump treatments.

Cutting off at ground level makes sense but treating the cut stump area might not. Simply, it means removing sawdust/debris from the cut surface then applying a herbicide mixture (more below) to the point of pooling to the cut area. It needs to be done in a relatively short time frame after the tree is cut off, typically within 30-60 minutes so the herbicide can be readily absorbed before the sap hardens and seals over the exposed area.

The area to treat is important as well. Concentrate the herbicide on the cambium and light-colored sapwood areas near the outside edge of the stump to ensure herbicide translocation. It's also important, particularly with certain species, to treat exposed trunk/roots that can become growth points for 'suckers' later if not.

The species being treated dictates our product of choice, but much of the chemistry is the same used in basal bark treatments – and maybe even in the same ratios. So, while there are additional herbicides for cut stump treatments you might *not* use for basal bark treatments, triclopyr containing products work on many species with aminopyralid and picloram products providing some enhanced efficacy potential in locust species. As with any herbicide product, always read and follow label directions pertaining to rate, carrier mix, species controlled, and haying/grazing restrictions (some picloram products are *not* labeled for range/pasture and glyphosate labels differ in what sites they can be used on.). NOTE: the stumps of Eastern red cedar do *not* need to be treated. Unlike many woody plants, this species does not root sprout. Simply cutting Eastern red cedar below the lowest green branch will kill it.

Brush control will be the focus in this space for one more week and include a 'catch-all' of other options you might want to consider. If you want a head start on the chemical side of the brush control equation, request a copy of the 2024 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide (also available online) from any District Office or drop me a line at dhallaue@ksu.edu.