



Multiflora Rose - Time for Action

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Multiflora rose is a perfect example of a good idea gone awry. Introduced into the Midwest from Japan as a living fence and for wildlife cover years ago, it now infested 1000s of acres beyond the sites of the original plantings. And I hear very often how it has exploded into very serious levels of infestation in the last 10 years or so. We know the interest in tackling the problem is high. Two field days held on multiflora rose last week in Richland and Crawford counties drew more than 100 people.

Numerous phone calls and emails reinforce the fact that many land owners have decided it's time to take action and are asking what is the best action to take. While mechanical and biological control strategies are helpful, most people plan to use herbicides and the rest of this article will address issues related to that approach.

Previous work

Many Midwestern states have a similar problem and most have tested herbicides for multiflora rose control. The best bulletin (no. 857) that summarizes years of mechanical, biological and chemical research trials on multiflora rose in several states is from The Ohio State University. It is bulletin no. 857 which is out of print (they hope to reprint soon) but it is available on the internet at: <http://www.caf.wvu.edu/~forage/multifloralos/>.

We did studies in Wisconsin in the 1980s (summarized in an Agronomy Advice article at: http://ipcm.wisc.edu/uw_weeds/extension/articles/multirose.htm) and found several herbicides and control strategies to be effective and economical. Interestingly there are few new alternatives for multiflora rose control so that 1993 reference is still useful



2003 trials.

Two weeks ago I observed the two sites where I applied Ally, Crossbow and glyphosate as foliar treatments to multiflora rose last August. The year-after evaluations are the real test of effectiveness on any perennial weed and that is certainly true for multiflora rose. Last fall the most impressive results were with Crossbow: the multiflora rose foliage was desiccated and canes appeared

to be dying. However, this spring there was abundant regrowth from the base of the

stems at one site and slight to moderate regrowth at the other. Ohio State found that multiflora rose control with Crossbow applied after July was highly variable in performance. The very dry conditions after my applications may be a significant factor in the regrowth we saw this spring. In previous multiflora rose trails, we applied Crossbow in June or early July with excellent results. It seems we should target Crossbow applications to the first half of summer.

Ally and glyphosate applied in August 2003 appeared to be less effective than Crossbow in September (less dramatic effects on the foliage) but resulted in very effective total plant kill at one site while a few bushes had resprouting stems at the second site. Thus, these alternatives have a full season window of application.

Current alternatives

The most practical alternative for controlling multiflora rose with herbicides is to make foliar applications. Various herbicides could be used. The following table summarized what we believe are the alternatives most will consider.

Table 1. Summary of the characteristics of herbicides for multiflora rose control.

Characteristic	Ally/Escort	Crossbow	glyphosate
active ingredient	metsulfuron	triclopyr + 2,4-D ester	glyphosate
safe to	grasses	grasses	nothing
soil life	1 mo. or more	1 mo.	very short
vapor drift risk	no	yes	no
grazing restriction	none	next season for milking cows; none for other livestock	14 days
can be used in	Ally: pastures Escort: non-crop sites	pastures	pastures and non-crop sites
when to apply	May - Sept.	May - early July	May - Sept.
approximate price	\$25/ounce	\$50/gallon	\$20-40/gallon
concentration to apply	1 oz product/100 gallons water	1 to 1.5%, v/v	1%, v/v
price to mix 4 gallons	\$1.00	\$2 to 3.00	\$0.80 to 1.60
additive needed	yes, NIS	no	generally no; AMS in some situations

Ally and Escort are identical product except for where they are labeled to be used. Both require that a non-ionic surfactant be used in the spray solution.

Crossbow does not allow dairy cows to be use treated pastures until the season after an application. This will be changed to a much shorter interval once additional data has been reviewed and approved by the EPA. Both active ingredients in Crossbow are formulated esters. Be very cautious about using Crossbow near sensitive vegetation (especially tomatoes, grapes, tobacco) particularly during periods of hot weather.

If you have hard water, add spray grade ammonium sulfate to the water before adding glyphosate to the water.

Other comments

What can be done when the rose canes are more than 10 feet tall in and around the woods? If possible, consider mowing with a heavy duty brush mower and treat the regrowth. Be careful not to spray leaves of desired trees with any of these herbicides. Some exposure to them will not be of consequence to well-established trees but younger trees that receive herbicide on 25 to 50% of their leaf area will be in trouble.

What if my rose bushes are an impenetrable thicket? Again, mowing first and treating the regrowth would help but is not often practical. Certainly you'll need more than a backpack sprayer in these cases. Treat as far into the "jungle" as you can this year and plant to continue the attack next year.

Several people have asked about **using Tordon (picloram)** for multiflora rose control. Tordon is highly effective on this and many other brush species. Many years ago, Tordon pellets were available and popular for their ease of application: simply sprinkle some pellets under the bushes and wait of a good rain to move the active ingredient into the root zone. The problem sometimes was that the movement of picloram didn't stop at the root zone but reach the groundwater. This was aggravated by probable over application of the pellets because many people doubted that the recommended quantity was sufficient and increased the amount of pellets applied.

Tordon is not labeled for use in pastures east of the Mississippi River. If your multiflora rose bushes are in non-crop areas, then it is legal to use products that contain picloram for multiflora rose control. Nearly all products with picloram are restricted use herbicides requiring applicators to be certified (probably in the Right-of-way category) before purchasing, handling and applying them.

Others have asked about **using Spike pellets**. Spike is also effective on many brush species and the pelleted version is labeled for use in pastures and convenient to handle and apply. The reasons not to use Spike except in very rare situations are two-fold: 1) Spike is non-selective and will kill all vegetation in the treated area, and 2) Spike is very persistent resulting in areas with no vegetation for 3 to 5 years. On sloping sites, the area of dead vegetation will extend down the slope from where the pellets were placed at least 4 feet and sometimes further.

Summer events

We have scheduled three field days on multiflora rose and other invasive weeds

for 2004. The schedule is as follows:

Aug. 18: Yellowstone Wildlife Area, Lafayette Co.
Aug. 19: Franbrook Farm, Green Co.
Aug. 20: Otis Nelson Farm, Iowa Co.

Details regarding the starting times, species covered at each site, directions to the sites, etc. will be announced soon.

I am continuing my research on multiflora rose control at the Franbrook Farm this year. The standard and additional herbicides and a range of application dates will be tested.

Summary

A statement from my 1993 Agronomy Advice bulletin on multiflora rose makes a fitting end to this article:

“There are several strategies that producers can use to manage multiflora rose infestations. Regardless of the one used, it is important to continue the management program until the population is nearly eradicated. This appears to be at least for 3 years with annual treatments and then alternate year applications should continue until the seed bank is depleted.”

For more information: <http://www.invasivespecies.gov/profiles/multiflrose.shtml>

Disclaimer: The mention of specific herbicides in this article is for your convenience and is not an endorsement of one product over other similar products nor criticism of products not mentioned. You may find other products in the marketplace that also control multiflora rose. You are responsible for following current label directions in using any herbicide.

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