

Crossroads

Fall 2000



TRANSPORTATION Information Center — LTAP

University of Wisconsin—Madison

Tips for better brushing

Fall is a good time for cutting brush in right of ways. Richard Stark, WisDOT landscape architect offers some tips and suggestions:

✂ Fall is the season for spraying Krenite S. Applying it just before trees and shrubs start turning color keeps plants from leafing out the next spring. It lets crews spray at a less-busy season and avoids the “browncut” that occurs with conventional herbicides that must be used when the plant is actively growing. Browncut is unattractive and can bring calls from unhappy citizens.

✂ Treating stems after woody plants are dormant is very effective in preventing regrowth. Brush less than 3 inches in diameter need not be cut; just apply an herbicide such as GARLON 4 to the bottom 1½–2 feet of the stems. The product is absorbed into the tree which then doesn’t leaf out the next year. Cut brush with stems larger than 3 inches in diameter and treat the stumps. This approach reduces herbicide use.

✂ “Feathered” edges make more attractive roadsides, especially in heavily wooded areas. For safety in the clear zone, remove plants capable of growing over 4 inches in diameter. But let smaller plants—like dogwoods, sumac, and hazelnut—grow in between the ditch and the fence

line to avoid the “tunnel through the trees” look. Don’t let woody plants grow in the bottom of the ditch, though, because that could impede drainage.

✂ Where roadsides have sandy slopes with sparse vegetation, do brushing after the ground is frozen. Driving in with large brushing equipment tends to rut the slopes and open the soil to invasive weeds—making more work for next year. It may look odd to be out there mowing when there’s a little snow on the ground, but doing it then will protect roadsides against erosion and weeds.

✂ Work on the south and west sides of the roads first if you have limited time and money for brushing. “Daylighting” by cutting taller vegetation lets the sun help with thawing and ice control.



Example of “tunnel” cutting (top) and the more attractive results from “feather” cutting along roadside (bottom).

Pesticide Applicator Training, refreshers, and certification exams are offered annually. Contact your County UW-Extension office for dates and application forms. Thanks to Richard Stark for these suggestions. Mention of specific commercial products does not imply endorsement by the T.I.C.

“Wet-Blade” mower system shows promise

Unique new equipment developed by the Burch Co. of North Carolina uses mower blades to apply liquid herbicides. Tests show it is very effective in permanently eliminating noxious weeds and preventing brush from re-sprouting. It uses significantly less herbicide than conventional spraying. Tests in Wyoming showed 98%

control of Canada thistle and 99% control of leafy spurge one year after treatment. Tests on alder, quaking aspen, and wild cherry are planned for British Columbia next summer.

The system uses the plant’s physiology, letting vascular action pull the herbicide right into the roots. Also, even with the

blade spinning at 200 mph, the herbicide goes only on the plant. It is not wasted on soil, rocks, etc.

Three commercial versions of the Wet-Blade System® ship this summer: for tractor mowers, boom arm mowers, and commercial turf mowers.

For information on this system call 336/667-9196 or check their web site at www.wetblade.com.

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