

# Fall is a good time for



*Leafy spurge*

Fall in Wyoming is an excellent time for treating some of the most hard-to-control, perennial noxious weeds. These include leafy spurge, Dalmatian toadflax, Russian knapweed, field bindweed, and Canada thistle.

Their extensive root systems make them difficult to control. As the weather cools and winter approaches, these perennial plants are actively producing carbohydrates that will be stored in the roots and help them overwinter and resprout in spring. A timely application of herbicide in this season can rapidly move to the root for excellent weed control. Timing is the key in fall treatments, so read the label thoroughly.

The following are some specific recommendations for treating these perennial noxious weeds. There are many herbicide options, so contact a local weed and pest control district for specific herbicide and timing recommendations. A list of districts is available online at [www.wyoweed.org/wp\\_dist.html](http://www.wyoweed.org/wp_dist.html). Mention of a specific herbicide does not constitute endorsement.

Leafy spurge treated in fall with imazapic (Plateau®) has shown promising results. The Plateau label contains a long paragraph on timing and other

restrictions for leafy spurge so, again, **read the label.**

Russian knapweed and Canada thistle can both be treated with either picloram (Tordon™) or clopyralid/triclopyr (Redeem®) in

the fall with good results. Picloram is a restricted use herbicide and requires a private applicator's license to purchase and apply. Plateau® can also be used on Russian knapweed in a **very** late fall treatment (read label for specific timing).

Dalmatian toadflax is difficult to control with herbicides; however, a late fall treatment of imazapic has shown excellent results. Timing is critical in this treatment so read the label carefully.

Field bindweed is becoming the bane of many a lawn and pasture. A late fall treatment (just before killing frost) of a very strong rate of glyphosate (Roundup) can produce excellent results. Using a 5-pound active ingredient (AI) per acre rate of a glyphosate that has a non-ionic surfactant included in the formulation (examples: Roundup® Pro, Glyphosate Pro, Buccaneer® Plus, etc.) will improve control. Look on the label under "ingredients" to determine how much AI the product contains. In Roundup®, glyphosate is the AI. Remember that glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide and will kill grass and broadleaf plants it comes in contact with.

For minor field bindweed infestations in lawns or desirable plantings, a "wipe-on" method can be an option. Start by gathering several empty buckets. Dilute 4 pounds AI per gallon glyphosate at 33 percent solution (1 part glyphosate, 2 parts water). Lay the empty bucket on its side in the lawn. Take the field bindweed vine and lay it inside the empty bucket then wipe the vine with the 33-percent solution glyphosate.

Use nitrile (impervious for chemical to pass through) or rubber gloves and a sponge or paintbrush to wipe the plant down. Leave the bindweed vine in the bucket while the product dries on the plant. As the one plant is drying, move on to other buckets and use the same method.

The product will not damage the surrounding grass once the product has completely dried, and the bucket can be removed. Sounds labor intensive....it is! But the results will be worth the effort! This treatment must be done in late fall just before killing frost to be effective.



*Dalmatian toadflax*

# weed management



*Canadian thistle*

Control of annual and biennial weeds involves limiting their seed production. Deadheading (cutting off and disposing of the seed heads) annual and biennial weeds that were missed this spring and even mowing with a grass catcher attachment works to harvest the weed seeds. Biennial weeds (living two years) that were missed can also be dug up and disposed of. Examples of biennials include houndstongue, spotted and diffuse knapweed, scotch and musk thistle, and black henbane.

What about cheatgrass (also known as downy brome), an invasive, exotic, annual grass that germinates in autumn and sometimes in the spring? Pre-emergent herbicides are used at this time of the year to prevent cheatgrass from germinating. This work can be tricky because of low per-acre herbicide rates and site evaluation, so see a local weed and pest control district for recommendations for cheatgrass control.

Fall is also a good time to plant desirable cool-season grasses that provide weed competition and forage for livestock and wildlife, help hold precious soils, and prevent erosion. The best species of grasses will depend on management goals, soil type, precipitation zone, weeds present, etc.

Great resources for species selection and planting techniques are local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and UW Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) offices. A listing of Wyoming NRCS offices is available at [www.wy.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wy.nrcs.usda.gov) and then clicking on the Find a Service Center link. A listing of CES offices is available at [www.uwyo.edu/UWCES/Counties.asp](http://www.uwyo.edu/UWCES/Counties.asp).

Cultural control of weeds (using competition from desirable plants) is often key to long-term weed con-

trol that results in less money spent, less herbicides used, and a healthy plant community that benefits wildlife and livestock.

Cultural control is also the most often overlooked and underutilized component in a weed-management plan.

Start by evaluating your land to determine if there is an adequate population of competitive grasses. Depending on location, two or three perennial grass plants per square foot are adequate and reseeding is not required. If there is an adequate population of grass, then concentrate on managing that grass to improve its health and vigor. Do this by avoiding grazing during the critical spring months until the grass has put on seed and only removing half the annual production.

If there is not an adequate population of grass, or a more productive species is desired, start evaluating options for seeding. If planting land without access to irrigation water, expect to defer grazing for at least two years to allow planted grasses to establish.

Before any seeding, control the competition from other plants – whether those plants are weeds or grasses. This can be accomplished using either soil disturbance (disking, harrowing, etc.) or using herbicides.

This autumn, between tying favorite dry flies and scouting elk, do some weed control! Treat perennial noxious weeds with herbicides recommended by a local weed and pest control district, grub up and get rid of any seeded-out biennial weeds and, for gosh sakes, make an investment in long-term weed control by planting those beat up, drouthed-out areas with an adaptable cool-season grass! And, above all.....pray for precip!



*Russian knapweed*

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