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Don't Get Stumped

by Mark Peterson, PhD Weed Scientist (retired)



Fall will soon be here, and it will be time to get out and cut down all that nasty,

can start you on the road to success or a path to frustration.

The problem is that most woody plants have what are known as axillary/basal buds within the main stem and crown. Most of the time these buds are suppressed by growth further up the plant, but when you cut off the top growth these axillary buds are released and start new shoots. Ultimately, you can end up with a broader, bushier plant than you started with that's even more difficult to remove.

So what to do? One option is to pull up the entire plant by the roots rather than cut it off, if that's possible. This can be effective, but also very labor intensive. It also can be next to impossible with larger plants. The other option is to treat the stump with a herbicide that translocates down into the base of the plant to kill the axillary buds and roots. However, what herbicide you use and how you use it are of prime importance.

No matter what herbicide you use, it is important to treat the stump soon after cutting. Within minutes, a cut stump will start to ooze sap and start to "heal over" the cut. Once this exudate dries it makes it more difficult for most herbicides to move into the stump. In fact, most research indicates that this phenomenon is so active in the spring that it is better to not use cut-stump methods during that time of year. Most herbicides will be poorly transported to the crown and roots at this time. Fall is generally the best time to cut and treat since the plant is in a "storage mode" of moving photosynthate down to the roots and herbicides can hitch a ride.

So what herbicide treatments are best for cut stumps? The following are some recommendations including a few comments and precautions. Tradenames are given as examples but most of these can be found under other product names as well.

Glyphosate. Most people are familiar with this under the tradename Roundup®, but there are many, many different brands sold in a variety of formulations. On the front of the container (sometimes in absurdly small print) you will find the list of active ingredients and the concentrations thereof. Look for products that have just glyphosate at a concentration of at least 41%. When you see Roundup products in lawn and garden centers they are often very low concentration and you are paying a lot for something that is mostly water. Apply a solution of at least 20-50% of your glyphosate product of choice to the cut surface immediately after cutting, making sure the solution runs at least 2-3 inches down the stem. For example, a gallon of 50% solution would contain two quarts of product and two quarts of water. If you go to the farm store, beware of glyphosate products that contain the words "Total Vegetation Control". These products often contain another active ingredient called imazapyr. They will work great as cut stump treatments, but I don't recommend their use by untrained individuals since they can kill most desirable plants that are nearby.

Triclopyr. This herbicide is often sold under the tradename Garlon®, although it can also be found in products with other names. Again, look at the active ingredient list. It helps to pay attention to the formulation of triclopyr you're using. I recommend what are called ester formulations (e.g. Garlon® 4) for cut-stump and woody brush control. A combination of triclopyr ester and 2,4-D ester is marketed under the tradename Crossbow®, though it may also be found under other names. This combination can best be applied as a 4% solution in diesel fuel. Apply the solution to cut stumps until

Picloram. This is often sold under the tradename Tordon®. A common product I see in the farm stores is Tordon® RTU. RTU stands for “Ready To Use”, so you don’t have to dilute it. Just apply the product straight from the bottle to the cut stump. It is highly effective but also highly mobile in soil and can be absorbed by roots of desirable plants that are near the point of application. I recently spoke with somebody who used Tordon RTU to treat cut honeysuckle and ended up killing a nearby tree that his daughter had planted. Use this one carefully!!

Application to the cut stump can be made with a variety of devices. Small squirt bottles and hand pump sprayers are often used. I usually take an empty herbicide container, drill a hole in the cap, and run a short piece of flexible tubing through the hole. This allows me to mix my herbicide of choice in the container and then dribble it out on the stump after cutting. Make sure you remove the original label and mark the container clearly with what is inside.

Always wear eye protection, gloves, long pants, and close-toed shoes when applying herbicides. The above-mentioned products are safe to use when applied according to the directions. Be sure to read the product label for instructions and precautions!

A wealth of information is available from your university extension specialists. Some online publications I’ve found particularly helpful:

[Controlling Non-Native Invasive Plants in Ohio Forests: Bush Honeysuckle](#)

[Invasive Plant Species in Hardwood Tree Plantations](#)

[A Field Identification Guide to Invasive Plants in Michigan’s Natural Communities](#)

RIP Squad Returns for Stiltgrass Removal



RIP (Remove Invasive Plant) Squad helps protect our native plants by removing garlic mustard in the spring, stilt grass in the summer, and woody invasives in the fall.

RIP Squad 's focus will be on Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) at Ross Hills Park in mid-to late August.

For details, contact Patty Jones 765-463-3050 (landline-voicemail) or email removeinvasiveplants.wcinpaws@gmail.com.

Invasive Species Education Event with the Happy Hollow
Garden Club



On June 2, 18 members of the Happy Hollow Garden Club met at the home of Mark and Angie Peterson for a presentation and discussion on invasive plants. Mark (TICT Education Committee volunteer) talked about invasives in Tippecanoe County, their identification, importance, and strategies for management. He also provided information about TICT and its mission to bring groups and individuals together to combat invasive species. After the presentation several members were led on a brief tour of the restored woodlands on the property.

Recap: Wabash Invasive Removal Work Day



Shout out to employees at Wabash (formerly Wabash National) for helping remove invasive plants from WREC and NICHES properties on July 27! We'd love to host more work days this fall. Contact us if you know a company or group that would like to get involved!

TICT in the Community



Mary Cutler, Tippecanoe County Parks Naturalist and Education Committee co-chair and trusted volunteer, Gary at the TICT booth at Riverfest! Stop by to experience the "Invasives on Trial" activity!

Have you seen us out in the community? We've had a booth at Prophetstown State Park's Pollinatorpalooza, Wabash Riverfest, the Lafayette Farmers Market, and the West Lafayette Farmers Market! We will be at the next **Mosey Down Main Street on Saturday, August 13 from 6 - 9 pm**. Stop by and say hi!

Upcoming Event: Pedal Prophetstown



Saturday, September 3 from 10 am - 3 pm - Enjoy a park-wide scavenger hunt best



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