Killing brush in the winter time is something we don’t normally think about. It can however, be an effective way of removing brush invaders out of a pasture or fence line. Several different methods of controlling brush in the winter exist and each works a little differently depending on the size of the tree and how the chemical is applied.

Cut stump treatments are an effective way of controlling unwanted brush and should be used any time a tree is mechanically cut down to reduce the incidence of resprouting of the tree from the stump or associated basal buds. After choosing a herbicide that will be most effective on the species you are trying to kill, mix 25% of the herbicide with 75% diesel (1 quart of chemical to 3 quarts of diesel/gallon). Once the plant has been cut down, treat the out side edge of the stump or stem with a liberal amount of the spray. The liquid should be sprayed on heavy enough so that it runs down the side of the stump to the soil level. This works best on basal sprouting species of trees such as oaks and elms. It is not quite as effective on root sprouting species such as locusts and persimmon.

Conventional Basal bark treatments are similar to the cut stump treatments. Instead of cutting the tree down, you just apply the herbicide oil mix to the lower 15 to 20 inches of the trunk or stem of the plant you are trying to kill. It is important to treat the entire circumference of the tree until the herbicide diesel mixture begins to run off and begins to puddle around base of plant. The diesel herbicide mixture is 4% herbicide to 96% diesel (151 cc of herbicide to each gallon of diesel). This treatment is effective at any time of the year.

Low Volume Basal Bark treatments are similar to convention except that less liquid is sprayed on the plant stem. The diesel–chemical mixture is 20% herbicide to 80% diesel, (757 cc of chemical mixed in a gallon of diesel or a pint and a half of chemical mixed with diesel to complete 1 gallon). You just apply the herbicide oil mix to the lower 12-15 inches of the trunk or stem of the plant. It is important to treat the entire circumference of the tree until the herbicide diesel mixture begins to run down the trunk but doesn’t puddle on the soil. This treatment can be applied any time of the year but is most effective April to October.

Soil Applied Spot Concentrate: These treatments are applied either in clay pellet formulations or as applications of herbicide concentrate at the base of the tree or brush species you intend to kill. Application rates are based on the brush size and brush species. Refer to the chemical label before attempting treatment. These spot treatments will need rainfall in order to get the chemical down in the soil were the tree roots can pick them up the following spring. Application timing is best left to late winter during the February to April time frame but will work year round.

There are many herbicides that work well with these different application methods. Some of the more common are triclopyr, dicamba, picloram, tebuthiuron, and mixtures of 2,4-D with other broadleaf herbicides. When choosing a herbicide to use, select one that is active against the brush species you are trying to kill by the treatment method you are using. A table listing brush species by herbicide susceptibility can be obtained at the county extension office.
Prescribed Burn Association Sets Meeting dates and programs
By Wendie Powell, Okfuskee County Ag Educator

This voluntary organization serves Okfuskee County and area farmers and ranchers. We have a commitment to using safe, manageable, and thoroughly researched fire protocols to eliminate the invasive plant species that threaten the future of production agriculture.

Mark your calendars for the 2018 meetings! Meeting will be held in the Okfuskee County OSU Extension Office or the Okfuskee County Fairgrounds.

Jan 9 – Association Open House
Feb 13 – Wildfire Biology
Mar 13 – Burn Plans
Apr 10 – Demonstration Burn
May 10 – Summer Burn Benefits & Discussion Panel
Sept 11 – BIA Fire Fighters & Cultural Preservation
Oct 9 – Cooperation Commission—Who does what?
Nov 14 – Open Discussion
Dec 12 – Open Discussion

Annual dues for the association are $25, payable

February Garden Tips  (OSU Factsheets in parenthesis)
By David Hillock, Extension Specialist Consumer Horticulture

**General**
- Base any plant fertilization on a soil test.
- Provide feed and unfrozen water for your feathered friends.
- Clean up birdhouses before spring tenants arrive during the middle of this month.
- Avoid salting sidewalks (damage can occur to plants). Use alternative products: sand or kitty litter

**Trees & Shrubs & Flowers**
- Fertilize trees, including fruit and nut trees and shrubs, annually. ([HLA-6412](#))
- Most bare-rooted trees and shrubs should be planted in February or March. ([HLA-6414](#))
- Finish pruning shade trees, summer flowering shrubs and hedges. Spring blooming shrubs such as forsythia may be pruned immediately after flowering. ([HLA-6409](#))
- Look for arborvitae aphids on many evergreen shrubs during the warmer days of early spring.
- Gall-producing insects on pecans, hackberries, etc. need to be sprayed prior to bud break of foliage.
- Dormant oil can still be applied to control mites, galls, overwintering aphids, etc. ([EPP-7306](#))
- Force spring flowering branches like forsythia, quince, peach, apple, and weigela for early bloom indoors.
- Forced spring bulbs should begin blooming indoors. Many need 10-12 wks of cold, dark conditions to bloom.
- Feed tulips in early February.
- Wait to prune roses in March.

**Fruit & Nuts**
- Spray peaches and nectarines with a fungicide for prevention of peach leaf curl before bud swell. ([EPP-7319](#))
- Mid-February is a good time to begin pruning and fertilizing trees and small fruits.
- Collect and store graftwood for grafting pecans later this spring.
- Begin planting blackberries, strawberries, asparagus and other perennial garden crops later this month.
- Choose fruit varieties that have proven track records for Oklahoma. Fact Sheet [HLA-6222](#) has a list.

**Turf & Vegetables**
- A product containing glyphosate plus a broadleaf herbicide can be used on dormant bermuda in January or February when temperatures are above 50°F for winter weed control.
- Cool-season vegetable transplants can still be started for late spring garden planting.
- By February 15 many cool-season vegetables like cabbage, lettuce, peas and potatoes can be planted. ([HLA-6004](#))
Livestock Risk Protection is an insurance product that protects against declines in market prices. In the past, the main focus when raising livestock has been on the production side. Arguably, this is still true. However, price is at the forefront of many producer’s minds due to recent market volatility. This insurance product is available for multiple species. For the purpose of this article, cattle examples will be used.

Livestock Risk Protection can be purchased through a livestock insurance agent. This product insures between 1 and 1,000 head at a time. The length of the insurance coverage varies by week.

Coverage levels vary between 70% and 100% of the expected ending value of the animals. The coverage options available vary each day so it is important for producers to check the RMA website http://www.rma.usda.gov/livestock daily to determine which coverage options are available. The ending values of the policy are based upon the weighted average prices reported in the CME Group Feeder Cattle Index. This index is used to settle the Feeder cattle contracts.

An indemnity payment is triggered if the actual ending value is lower than the coverage price. This has nothing to do with what the producer receives for the animals in the cash market when they sell the cattle. Indemnity payments will only occur if the price declines below the coverage level during the coverage period. Also, the producer must own the cattle and have taken delivery of them in order to qualify for the insurance coverage.

An example of the insurance coverage includes a producer who wants to use LRP to put a floor on his 2018 steer crop. He normally sells in the middle of May and his steers currently weigh 500 pounds. His herd consists of 100 predominately Angus cross steers.

The insurance is purchased in January so he needs 17 weeks of coverage. The option he selects includes feeder cattle steers for the 2018 crop year with an expected ending value of $145.672 per hundred weight (cwt). He chooses a 91% coverage level with a coverage price of $132.200 per cwt. The premium will be $1.785 per cwt. He expects the steers to gain 250 pounds over the course of this coverage. The premium is calculated by multiplying the final weight in cwt. by the premium cost per cwt. and the number of head covered. So 7.5 cwt. X $1.785 X 100 hd. = $1338.75. RMA subsidizes 13 percent of the premium cost so the producer will be responsible to pay $1338.75 X .87 = $1164.71.

In the event that on May 3rd the actual value is below the coverage price of $132.200 per cwt., an indemnity payment will be triggered. If prices fall to $120.00 cwt., the producer would be paid a premium in the following example. The price decline in this example is $132.20 - $120.00 = $12.20. The producer’s payment is 100 hd. X 7.5 cwt. X $12.20 = $9,150.00. This farmer received an indemnity payment of $9,150.00 on 100 steers for the cost of $13.39 per head. While there is no way to know what the actual ending price will be, this is an option to manage downside price risk.

Perils not covered include death, government seizure, and forced destruction. If one of these events do occur, the producer is required to notify their insurance agent within 72 hours of the occurrence of the loss. By giving notice of the loss, the producer will have the affected livestock included if an indemnity is payable on the endorsement. Not giving notice of the loss will result in the affected livestock being excluded from the indemnity calculation and the premium will not be refunded.

Some producers are aware of hedging and the ways that they can manage price risk in the futures markets. There are many reasons, however, why producers do not utilize this option. They may not have enough cattle to fill an entire contract, they may be reluctant to pay brokerage fees and margin calls, or they just do not understand the complicated world of futures markets and are uncomfortable with that risk management system. Livestock Risk Protection allows a producer to tailor the insurance coverage to the number of cattle he needs to insure at a price where he will remain profitable.

The application for Livestock Risk Protection can be filled out at any time, but insurance does not come attached until a specific endorsement is made. The insurance coverage will begin when a specific endorsement is made and approved by RMA. For more information contact the county extension educator.
March Garden Tips  (OSU Factsheets in parenthesis)

By David Hillock, Extension Specialist Consumer Horticulture

Lawn and Turf
• Remove excessive thatch from warm-season lawns. Dethatching precedes crabgrass control treatment. (HLA-6604)
  • Broadleaf weeds can easily be controlled in cool-season lawns at this time with post-emergent broadleaf herbicides.
  • Pre-emergent crabgrass control chemicals can still be applied to cool- and warm-season turfgrasses. Heed label cautions when using any weed killers near or in the root zone of desirable plantings.
  • March is the second best time of the year to seed cool-season turfgrass (fall is best). (HLA-6419)
  • Cool-season lawns such as bluegrass, fescue, and ryegrass may be fertilized now with the first application of the season. Usually, four applications of fertilizer are required per year, in March, May, October, and November. (HLA-6420)
• Begin mowing cool-season grasses at 1 ½ to 3 ½ inches high. (HLA-6420)

Flowers & Vegetables
• Cultivate annual flower and vegetable planting beds to destroy winter weeds.
• Apply mulch to control weeds in beds. Landscape fabric barrier can reduce the amount of mulch but can dry out and prevent water penetration. Thus, organic litter makes the best mulch.
• Prune roses just before growth starts and begin a regular disease spray program as the foliage appears on susceptible varieties. (HLA-6403 & EPP-7607)
• Avoid excessive walking and working in the garden when foliage and soils are wet.
• Start warm-season vegetable transplants indoors.
• Divide and replant overcrowded, summer and fall blooming perennials. Mow or cut back old liriope and other ornamental grasses before new growth begins.
• Cool-season vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, carrot, lettuce, onion, peas, spinach, turnips etc. should be planted by the middle of March.
• Watch for cutworms that girdle newly planted vegetables during the first few weeks of establishment. Cabbage looper and cabbageworm insects should be monitored and controlled in the garden (EPP-7313).

Trees & Shrubs
• Prune spring flowering plants, if needed, immediately following their bloom period.
• Plant evergreen shrubs, balled and burlapped, and bare root trees and shrubs.
• Anthracnose control on sycamore, maple, and oak should begin at bud swell. (EPP-7634).
• Diplodia Pine Tip blight control on pines begins at bud swell.
• Chemical and physical control of galls (swellings) on stems of trees should begin now. EPP-7168 & EPP-7306)
• Dormant oil can still be applied to control mites, galls, overwintering aphids, etc. (EPP-7306)
• The first generation of Nantucket Pine Tip Moth appears, begin pesticide applications in late March. (EPP-7306)
• Control Eastern tent caterpillars as soon as the critters appear.

Fruits
• Continue to plant strawberries, asparagus, and other small fruit crops this month.
• Start your routine fruit tree spray schedule prior to bud
Managing Grazing of Horses
By Kris Hiney, Extension Equine Specialist and Daren D. Redfearn, Extension Forage and Pasture Management Specialist

Few horse owners prioritize grazing and forage management. Money is wasted by feeding more supplemental feed, and the appearance of the grazing area is undesirable. Lack of expertise and prioritizing of forage management may be the most frequently occurring mismanagement practice. How can horse owners control grazing of horses so they get the “best” out of pastures, and keep them from “tearing up” a pasture? These are simple questions with not so simple answers. In order to maximize utilization of pasture on the farm, owners need a general understanding of how horses utilize forage, factors affecting animal performance on pastures, and knowledge of grazing behavior of horses. Combining these “animal factors” with agronomic factors will allow owners to set realistic goals and design pasture plans that meet them.

Additional information, including recommendations on forage types and agronomic practices to enhance forage production, and considerations for management of “animal factors”, can be obtained from OSU Extension Facts, ANSI-3980 “Forage for Horses” and ANSI-3981 “Managing Grazing of Horses”

Some Recommendations to Manage Grazing in Horses

The scope of this article is confined more to grazing considerations than forage management practices such as forage species selection, fertilization, weed control, and mowing. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension offices provide additional resources on these subjects. Several recommendations for managing grazing of horses are provided below.

- The goal of forage management is to maintain the desired supply of digestible forage to grazing horses. Mature forage and weedy forage types are not efficiently digested.
- Establishing forage depends largely on what plant species are best adapted to the soil type and geographical area, and the types and levels of agronomic inputs owners are willing to employ.
- The length of forage grazing season will depend on use of warm and cool season forages, rainfall, grazing management, and agronomic practices employed.
- Don’t overestimate the available forage for stocking rate determination. Trees, sacrifice areas, overgrazed areas, and brush must be considered.
- If pastures are of adequate size, decrease sacrifice areas by practices such as frequently relocating feed troughs in pastures.
- Consider time limit grazing and rotational grazing programs, especially when housing horses on small acreages.
- Rotational grazing, companion grazing with other types of livestock, spreading of manure piles, and other management practices will reduce spot grazing.
- Pasture forage should be maintained at minimum optimal heights. Although complete removal of horses from pastures is not possible on many farms, rotational grazing or limited turnout time will help establish initial growth, and allow for regrowth during the active season of forage growth.
- Horses should be gradually introduced to forage types that are high in nutrients such as winter annuals. For example, start turn outs for 30 minutes once or twice per day for a couple of days, followed by a couple of days with access of 4 to 6 hours before continual turnout. Watch the horse’s health and behavior to determine how quickly to advance this introductory period. Allowing horses free choice hay while not on pastures during the introductory period will help decrease their appetite when they are turned out.
- Selection of forages to establish needs to be based on desired forage production times and amounts, forage compatibility to the geographical area, the expected grazing and trampling pressure, and the expected grazing and agronomic practices to be followed. In Oklahoma, the most common warm season perennials are bermudagrass and native prairie grasses. More information on species selections and agronomic practices are found at the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Office.
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