

Invasive Tree Management Fact Sheet

February 2022

Invasive Tree Management

Hardwood and conifer trees can be considered an invasive species when they spread from an area where they are desired to an area where they are not desired. Due to their aggressive and rapid growth, eastern red cedar, cottonwood, Willow trees, honey locust, and Siberian elm are examples of tree species that spread very easily from a desired location such as a windbreak, shelterbelt, or homestead to an undesired location like pastures, CRP, and other prime nesting cover areas. Through trial and error, land managers have come up with recommendations for removing these undesirable species and returning the area to a usable grassland and good nesting habitat.

Under the right conditions these species are capable of growing in dense patches, which is why it is critical to remove them before the population grows exponentially where they are not wanted (Photo 1). Prevention is the best method when controlling invasive tree species. Removing a handful of small trees (Photo 2) requires less labor and expense than mechanical removal after years of growth and continued spread. If the seed source of the invasive tree issue is located in an old windbreak or shelterbelt, you may decide removing the source is the best option to minimize future management. If it is a cedar tree windbreak, removing the female trees or the trees with berries will remove the seed source and the functioning windbreak can be left in place.

Management

When removing invasive species on your property it might be useful to consider these questions before acting too hastily:

- What species of invasive tree do I have?
- How many are there, how dense are they, and how tall are they?
- What is the best method for removing trees based on their density, size, and control method?
- Do I need to use chemical? (Eastern Red Cedar does not require chemical treatment.)
- Which is the best chemical to use?



Photo 1. Dense infestations of Siberian elm will often require mechanical clearing in conjunction with a chemical application, or a foliar chemical application.



Photo 2. Small clusters of trees can be quickly cut, and treated with chemical.

INTERESTING FACT

April 1—July 15

Avoid tree removal from April 1—July 15 during primary nesting season.

PHEASANTS forever The Habitat Organization
QUAIL forever The Habitat Organization
NEBRASKA GAME PARKS
The Nebraska Environmental Trust preserving NATURAL NEBRASKA™ for future generations
USDA NRCS United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
FSA FARM SERVICE AGENCY
The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Photo 3. The hack and squirt method can be a quick and easy method to kill multiple trees if you are short on chemical or labor.



Photo 4. Cutting the tree at ground level and treating with chemical is a sure-fire way to be certain that it will not re-sprout.



Photo 5. When treating a cluster of small trees with chemical, remember to treat all cut stumps.

Treatment Methods

Unlike conifer tree species, deciduous trees resprout after being cut. This means a chemical application will be necessary to eradicate the tree completely. For this reason, shredding, dozing, or a mechanical means where chemical is not used effectively is not recommended. This type of management usually results in a larger mess since one stem becomes multiple stems as it branches out from the cut stump. Follow all chemical labels to be sure the chemical you are using is effective on the plant you want to control and that you are using it during the right time of the year.

Hack and Squirt

Hack and squirt (Photo 3) is a good option when there are more trees to treat than time to do it. To use the hack and squirt method you need a tool to make a notch in the tree (hatchet, saw, etc.), and a chemical to put in the notch that you made. The notch does not have to encompass the circumference of the tree, but should penetrate the bark roughly 1/2". If the intent is to remove the trees from the area completely after treating them, it is important to leave them standing for a growing season to ensure that the chemical is able to work on the tree.

Cut and Treat

This sure-fire method is a great way to remove your trees and render the ground useful. The tree is cut at or just above ground level and then chemical is applied to the stump (Photos 4 and 5). When treating a cluster of small trees (less than 1/4" in diameter) be sure to apply chemical on every stump.

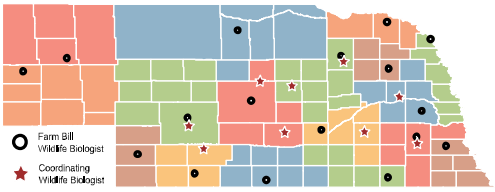
Edge Feathering

The idea behind edge feathering (Photo 6) is to create a "shrub-like" growth form that offers wildlife open ground and cover from weather and predators. When edge feathering, cut the tree until it drops without cutting clear through it. The reason for not applying chemical is to ensure that the tree will be alive instead of being a tree pile. By doing this, the top portion of the tree is still connected to the bottom portion allowing the top portion to grow upward. This method would be most applicable along a windbreak where the tree is not desired, but can still offer wildlife benefits.



Photo 6. Edge feathering will not kill these tree species unless chemical is applied, but it provides "shrub thicket" habitat for quail.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Through a partnership with Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, wildlife biologist are available to help provide wildlife habitat guidance, technical assistance on the available conservation programs and design seeding mixtures.

For further information visit NebraskaPF.com

PHEASANTS forever The Habitat Organization
QUAIL forever The Habitat Organization
NEBRASKA GAME PARKS
The Nebraska Environmental Trust preserving NATURAL NEBRASKA™ for future generations
USDA NRCS United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
FSA FARM SERVICE AGENCY
The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.