



Control Options for Butterfly Bush

General Information

Butterfly bush, or *Buddleja*, was added to the Washington State Noxious Weed list in 2006. This plant produces large quantities of very small seeds (up to 3 million per plant), which can be spread widely by wind, water, animals and human activity. Butterfly bush outcompetes native plants along waterways and in natural areas. Landowners who do not want to remove their butterfly bushes are strongly urged to dead head all flowers, to prevent their plants from contributing to the unintended spread of this species.

Manual/Mechanical Techniques

Seedlings can be removed by hand-pulling. Larger plants can be dug out. Plant parts should be disposed of responsibly, as branches and root-balls left on the ground can resprout. To control butterfly bush, without killing the plant, the shrub can be pruned back severely in the fall. This will produce a smaller, more compact plant in the spring. Flowers, then, will be more accessible, allowing them to be removed after flowering. If flowers are being removed from the plant after the flowers have dried, it is best to put a plastic bag over the flower before it is cut, to catch any falling seeds.



Chemical Recommendations

Butterfly bush can be controlled using specific herbicides. When using herbicides, always read and follow label directions for rates, spraying conditions, personal protective equipment and grazing intervals. If spraying is the chosen option, spray late in the evening to reduce the direct impact on pollinating insects. Do not spray when it is windy or raining, or when rain is forecast. Do not cut sprayed plants for at least 2 weeks after herbicide application. Herbicides should not be sprayed within 60 feet of water bodies and creeks, without further consultation with the Noxious Weed Board. Remember, it is the herbicide applicators responsibility to apply the product in accordance to the instructions on the label.

With butterfly bush, often the most effective use of herbicides is to make a cut-stump treatment. The trunk of the bush should be cut off at the base and concentrated *Glyphosate* (such as in Roundup) or *Triclopyr* (such as in Garlon or Brush B Gon) should be applied to the freshly cut surface. Another option, especially for smaller plants, is to spray the entire plant with a brush-control herbicide, containing triclopyr. Follow the directions on the label for the correct concentrations. Spray plants until they are just wet. Avoid spraying desired vegetation, as this herbicide can damage other plants.

NEVER apply RoundUp® or other herbicides to standing water unless they are distinctly labeled for aquatic use. Ingredients in non-aquatic products may be toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms. Aquatic formulations of herbicides are generally only available to licensed pesticide applicators in Washington State. If the target plants are immediately adjacent to or are in standing water, a state permit may be required in order to treat those plants with an aquatically approved herbicide.

- **Always read and understand the label of the herbicides you choose to use.**
- **More is NOT better when using herbicides, and may actually hinder the ability of the herbicide to injure the target plant if the solution is too strong. This wastes money and effort and puts more product into the environment than is necessary. ALWAYS follow the recommended rates on the label.**
- **With all herbicides, when you apply them is as important as how you apply them.**

The mention of a specific product brand name in this document is not, and should not be construed as an endorsement or as a recommendation for the use of that product. Herbicide information is taken from the WSU Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook.