



Control Options for Herb Robert

General Information

Herb Robert is a low growing geranium, either sprawling along the ground or growing upright to a height of 10 inches. The stems are often dark red and are covered with white hairs. The plants give off a pungent odor when crushed, leading to the alternate common name of "Stinky Bob". Flowers range in color from white to magenta, although bright pink is most common, and appear from early spring to late fall. The foliage turns bright red in the fall. The fern-like foliage of herb Robert is sometimes confused with bleeding heart. Herb Robert spreads by seeding prolifically, with the seeds being ejected from the plant, to a distance of 15 to 20 feet.



Manual/Mechanical Techniques

Eradicating herb Robert is difficult due to the large number of seedlings that one plant can produce. Due to its shallow root structure, this plant is easily pulled. Because it reproduces only by seed, hand-pulling should be done before flowering occurs. If there are too many plants to pull, sheet-mulching can prevent plants from spreading. Sheet mulching involves overlapping layers of newspaper and/or cardboard with natural mulch material (wood chips, compost etc) spread on top, 3-4 inches deep. Always monitor for new seedlings and do not let them get to the flowering/seeding stage. Carefully place pulled plants into bags and seal the bags on site. Check tools, shoes, and pant legs for hitchhiking seeds before leaving the area. Do not ever bring this plant home to plant in the garden. It spreads very quickly and invades natural areas.

Chemical Recommendations

Herb Robert can be managed using specific herbicides. Since the plant is often interspersed with other desirable plants, care should be taken not to injure off-target plants. 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. 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.

A **Glyphosate** solution at a rate of 1-2 % (of a 41% active ingredient product) should be used and applied during fall months to just wet the foliage (*glyphosate* is marketed as RoundUp[®], KillZall and many other brands). A 2% solution would be a mixture of 2.66 oz. of *glyphosate* concentrate per gallon of water.

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 and King County Noxious Weed Program.