

INFO BULLETIN - WEED CONTROL FOR PINE TREES

The primary reason for weed control when planting trees is to remove the competition for moisture, light and nutrients in the soil.

Weeds growing around a tree will not only reduce its growth rate but they can also reduce its chances of survival.

Creating a Favourable Environment

In order to establish trees successfully, a weed free zone should be created and maintained around each tree until the tree has become established. It is worth considering that weed control should be continued until the tree is:

- ❑ Between 1.5 - 2 metres tall.
- ❑ Vigorous with full foliage and a robust stem.
- ❑ Incapable of being overladen by adjacent vegetation.

This could take 12 months for fast growing trees and 18-24 months for slower growing ones.

Graze area prior to planting. Plant trees in the winter, and then spray over top of forest seedlings in the spring. There are specific chemicals that will eliminate the grass but not harm the tree. Talk to nursery staff or a chemical representative.

Useful Herbicides for Shelter/Forest Trees.

Before using herbicides, ensure the type and dose rate is correct for the vegetation being controlled, and the tolerance of the tree species. Selective herbicides are generally applied before, or more commonly, soon after trees are planted. More information on herbicides and their application is available from nursery staff or a chemical representative.

Pre-Plant Weed Control

Roundup or other *Glyphosate* chemical kills grasses and is very effective against aggressive perennials but has no residual effect. This could also be utilised around the trees post planting, but trees must be protected from drift otherwise the damage to the trees could be fatal.

Application rate: 10ml per litre of water

Postplant Weed Control

Terbuthylazine (in various forms) is an excellent postplant weed control that will control grass and broadleaf weeds and can be sprayed over pine tree seedlings. It should ideally be sprayed early September / early October, although it will not work where the grass is over 10cm tall, or when soil conditions are dry.

Application rate - Broadleaf weeds: 30ml per litre of water (will treat 20 trees).

Gallant Ultra is a highly selective chemical that will kill only grasses. It may be added to a Terbuthylazine mix in order to be effective on grasses over 10 cm tall.

Application rate - Grass: 0.5ml per litre of water (will treat 20 trees).

Versatil is a highly selective chemical that will kill thistles, clover, broom, gorse, etc... (although high rates would be needed on gorse and broom).

Application rate - Clover & Thistles: 2ml per litre of water (will treat 20 trees).

It may be added to a Terbuthylazine mix where gorse and broom are present.

Application rate - Gorse & Broom: 5ml per litre of water (will treat 20 trees).

NB. Selective Herbicides! Check the crop tolerance with nursery staff or a chemical representative before utilisation.