Give Trees A Chance with Proper Weed Control


Photo by Tim McCabe, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Many new windbreaks, woodlots, Christmas trees and wildlife habitat plantings will be planted this spring by enthusiastic tree planters. An important consideration in establishing seedling trees and shrubs is removal of weed competition.

New tree and shrub plantings should receive weed control for at least three years until the roots are established. The first year is critical; young trees depend on surface moisture to survive. Competition for moisture, light and nutrients by aggressive weeds and grasses may severely stunt or kill newly planted trees and shrubs.

Methods of controlling weed competition include cultivation, mowing and the use of chemical herbicides. The best time to control weeds and grasses is just before or during their seedling stage. Newly germinated weed seed can be killed easily by cultivation or chemicals.

Removal of competing vegetation about two feet on each side of tree rows or in a four-foot diameter circle around each seedling is most critical. Either cultivation or chemical weed control is effective.

Pre-emergent herbicides, such as simazine, applied to mineral soil just after planting will usually control most weeds for the growing season when applied in the proper amount and at the right time.

Cultivation is the surest method to control weeds and retain moisture for the seedlings. Cultivation shouldn't be too deep and should never ridge soil against the trees. Where moisture is sufficient and a cover between rows is desirable to prevent soil erosion, mowing vegetation between tree rows is an alternative.

People often want to plant aggressive grasses such as bromegrass or fescue between tree rows, but this generally isn't recommended. These grasses will smother out weeds, but will give young trees the worst kind of competition for moisture and nutrients. If perennial grasses must be planted, less competitive cool-season grasses, such as blue grass or rye grass or short warm-season grasses, such as blue grama or side-oats grama, should be considered. (DJ)

SOURCE: Dennis Adams, Nebraska Forest Service, NU/IANR

Utility Tractor Recall

John Deere has issued a recall for the following Compact Utility Tractors.

The hydrostatic transmission may not return to neutral when the operator releases the foot pedals. Full details can be found on the link to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Model	Serial Range
4210 CUT with HST	LV4210H220677 through LV4210H221025
4310 CUT with HST	LV4310H232267 through LV4310H233638
4410 CUT with HST	LV4410H241367 through LV4410H241821
4610 CUT with HST	LV4610H260774 through LV4610H260906
4710 CUT with HST	LV4710H270806 through LV4710H271286

Please find full details at www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml04/04527.html (DJ)

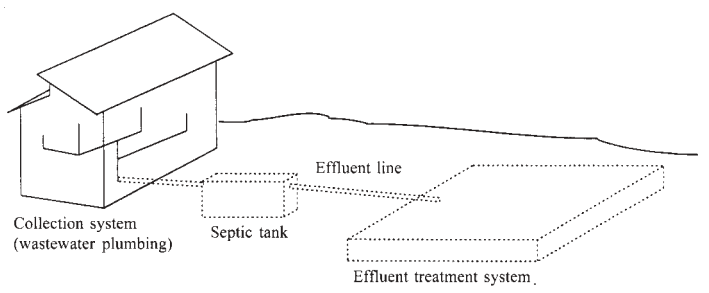
Daily Tractor Maintenance

Safe acreages can only remain safe if all family members practice safety every day. One practical way to keep tractors operating safely is to perform a daily maintenance check. The daily check should include:

- Fuel supply–enough for the job.
- Radiator water level–within 1/2-1 inch of cap.
- Tire pressure–proper for work. Check operator's manual.
- Check tires for cuts or breaks in the tread and sidewalls.
- Water level in battery–into opening. Use clean water.
- Transmission fluid level–above add mark on dip stick. Check operator's manual for type to add.
- Air cleaner. See operator's manual.
- Check for loose parts, bolts and nuts.
- Make sure all shields are in place.
- Clean off platform of tools, mud, grease and any crop residue.
- Check all lighting equipment and SMV (slow moving vehicle) emblems.
- Check other items listed in operator's manual at intervals stated. (DJ)

Use Drainfield Systems to Treat Effluent; Minimize Risks to Humans and Environment

Minimize risks to humans and the environment by properly treating effluent, or wastewater that has received initial treatment in a septic tank.



Effluent contains bacteria, viruses, organic particles, chemicals and nutrients. A properly designed, installed and maintained effluent treatment system destroys potentially harmful elements. A drainfield system is the most common type.

Proper design includes sizing the drainfield correctly by taking soil type and wastewater generation rates into consideration.

Residential wastewater treatment systems typically consist of wastewater plumbing from the house, a septic tank and an effluent treatment system. After preliminary treatment in a septic tank, effluent flows through a tank outlet to a distribution pipe in a drainfield, down through filter material and into the soil where final treatment and recycling occurs.

Traditional drainfield systems use gravel for filter material, but a gravelless system is a good alternative to a traditional one if the lot is remote, space is tight and clean gravel or other filter material is difficult to obtain.

For More Information on Drainfields

For more information on placement, operation and maintenance of drainfields, Jan Hygnstrom, extension project manager, NU/IANR, suggests you refer to the following NebGuides available at local Cooperative extension offices:

- *Residential On-site Wastewater Treatment: Site Evaluation* (G1469)
- *Residential On-site Wastewater Treatment: The Role of Soil* (G1468)
- *Residential On-site Wastewater Treatment*: *Traditional Drain Field Systems for Effluent Treatment* (G1479)
- *Residential On-site Wastewater Treatment: Gravelless Drainfield Systems for Effluent Treatment* (G1480)
- *Residential On-site Wastewater Treatment: Septic System and Drainfield Maintenance* (G1424)

To ensure that a drain field system design is in compliance with Nebraska regulations, see Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality Title 124; *Rules and Regulations for the Design, Operation and Maintenance of On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems. (DJ)*

"Septic Systems" is April Rural Living Clinic

The University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is presenting a series of seminars entitled "Acreage Insights -- Rural Living Clinics" to help acreage owners manage their rural living environment. "Septic Systems for Wastewater Treatment" is the fourth in the series, to be held April 24 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln.

A properly designed, installed, and maintained septic system should meet your needs by treating wastewater to protect the environment and your health. Learn about basic septic system design and installation, as well as six critical steps to properly maintain a system.

Preregistration is $10 per person, and must be received 3 working days before the program. Late registration is $15 per person. If a minimum number of registrations are not received, clinics will be cancelled and preregistered participants will receive a full refund.

For information about each of the programs in the workshop series or for a registration form, call the extension office for a brochure or go online at lancaster.unl.edu/hort/Programs/AcreageInsightsClinics.htm.

Free Composting Workshops

Grass and leaves are banned from the Lincoln Landfill from April 1 through Nov. 30 each year. Composting is a simple, practical and convenient way to transform yard wastes into a resource. By maintaining a compost pile or bin in your backyard, you can speed up nature's process of decomposition to create usable compost within a few months. Compost can then be used to improve soil structure and return vital nutrients to the soil.

Learn how to successfully compost by attending free composting workshops or demonstrations sponsored by the City of Lincoln Recycling Office and UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County. Attendees will receive a free compost bin or composting thermometer.

Composting Workshops (6:30 p.m.)

- **April 13 — Air Park Recreation Center (3720 NW 46 St.)**
- **April 20 — Belmont Recreation Center (1234 Judson St.)**
- **April 22 — Calvert Recreation Center (4500 Stockwell St.)**
- **April 27 — Easterday Recreation Center (6130 Adams St.)**
- **April 29 — Irving Recreation Center (2010 Van Dorn St.)**

Composting Demonstrations

From May to October, composting workshops with hands-on demonstrations will be presented the third Saturday of each month at 8:30 a.m. at the City Yard Waste Composting Demonstration Site, 50th and Colby.

For more information, call UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County at 441-7180.