

Still Time to Control Musk Thistles



In Fall, musk thistle is in the rosette stage (pictured), which is easier to control than later stages.

Musk thistles are relatively cold tolerant and continue to actively grow into November. Studies conducted at area universities in the Fall showed that 2,4-D applied after several nights of below 32° F degree temperatures still gave good control of musk thistles. The trend-line for this test indicated musk thistle control began to decline rapidly in November after more than 11 days of below freezing temperatures.

Increasing the rate from one quart to 2 quarts of 2,4-D per acre did not significantly improve musk thistle control. In most situations it would be advantageous to combine lower rates of 2,4-D in combination with Tordon 22K, Ally or Banvel for more consistent results or a broader spectrum of weed control.

Since we have had a decent Fall so far, the thistles will still be very susceptible to the chemicals.

—Don Janssen, UNL Extension Educator

Illegal Water Wells Must be Decommissioned

At one time, the term “abandoned wells” was used to refer to wells that were not being used and were in a state of disrepair. Today, the term “illegal wells” is used instead, which is actually the legal term for such wells.

Illegal water wells are in all 93 Nebraska counties. They penetrate all principal aquifers and vary considerably in construction and depth. Illegal wells represent a serious threat to human health and safety and to the overall quality of the state’s groundwater resources.

Threat to Groundwater

Groundwater normally is provided with some protection by a natural filter of soil, sand and gravel. Illegal and improperly constructed water wells are holes in that filter.

Illegal wells can allow surface runoff to flow directly down to the water-bearing zones, often carrying organic wastes, microbiological contaminants, fertilizers and other chemical residues such as pesticides and petroleum products into the groundwater. Small mammals and reptiles can fall into the water wells, further adding to the bacteriological contamination problem.

After contaminants enter

the groundwater supply they can move with the natural groundwater flow and may show up in public or private wells used to provide drinking water.

Once groundwater is contaminated, it is difficult, if not impossible to clean up, and the process is always expensive.

In addition, illegal wells are a safety hazard to humans and animals. A child can easily fall into a large diameter illegal well.

The Law

All illegal water wells must be decommissioned following requirements found in Title 178, Chapter 12, Regulations Governing Water Well Construction, Pump Installation and Water Well Decommissioning Standards of the Nebraska Health and Human Services System.



Decommissioning an illegal well includes filling and capping the hole.

Decommissioning Process

Water well decommissioning must be carried out or supervised by an individual with a valid Nebraska Water Well Standards and Contractors’ license.

The license may be that of water well contractor, water well drilling supervisor, pump installation contractor or pump installation supervisor. The only exception is that an individual may decommission a driven sand-point well if it is on land owned by him or her and used by him or her for farming, ranching or agricultural purposes or is at his or her place of residence.

The Nebraska Health and Human Services System maintains a list of individuals with a valid license. Information can be obtained by contacting them at 471-0546.

The decommissioning process will include removal of well equipment, disinfection, filling and sealing, capping and reporting. The price for decommissioning a well will depend on several factors including accessibility, construction technique and materials, depth and condition. Financial resources to help defray the cost of well decommissioning may be available from the Natural Resources District (NRD) serving your area.

Scrap Tire Collection Sept. 24 & 25

Individuals will have an opportunity to get rid of scrap tires that may have accumulated around your place. Tires (without the wheels) will be accepted Sept. 24 & 25 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Shoemakers Truck Stop, 48th and West O Street, Lincoln. Please have a count of the number of tires you are dropping off. Sorry, this opportunity is open to individuals only — the grant specially prohibits tire dealers.

This program is funded through a grant from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and hosted by the Emerald Sanitary Improvement District Number 6. For more information, call 476-3590.

Upcoming Acreage Insights Clinics

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension is presenting a series of seminars entitled “Acreage Insights — Rural Living Clinics” to help acreage owners manage their rural living environment.

Pre-registration is \$10 per person and must be received three working-days before the program. Late registration is \$15 per person. For more information or to register, contact extension at 441-7180 or go to the Acreage & Small Farm Insights Web site at <http://acreage.unl.edu>.

Grapes • Oct. 13

“Grapes” will be held Thursday, Oct. 13 from 7–9 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road in Lincoln. Steve Gamet, UNL Viticulture Techni-



cian, will discuss topics such as variety selection, the types of fencing and equipment needed for grapes, the economics of grape production, insect, disease and wildlife control for grapes, and the marketing of grapes to wineries. Steve will also answer your questions regarding grape production.

Woody Florals • Nov. 10

“Wood Florals” will be held Thursday, Nov. 10 from 7–9 p.m. Can you really make a profit with these plants? Yes, you can! Join us for this presentation by the Nebraska Woody Florals group to learn the basics of this acreage enterprise, including plant species, planting and growing requirements, and harvesting techniques. Marketing and sources of plant material will also be discussed.



Forestry Field Day, Sept. 24

“Planting Trees — Making the Good Life Better” is the theme for Forestry Field Day 2005, which will be held Saturday, Sept. 24 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Horning State Demonstration Forest near Plattsmouth. Admission to Horning State Demonstration Forest and all Forestry Field Day activities is free. No pre-registration is required.

Horning State Demonstration Forest is located two miles south of Plattsmouth on Horning Road. Signs will direct the way from U.S. Highways 73/75 and 34.

The 2005 program features five concurrent sessions in which professional foresters and other tree experts will demonstrate and discuss proper tree planting techniques. Added attractions include educational booths and exhibits, portable sawmill demonstrations, and portable post peeler demonstrations. Professional foresters will be available to answer questions.

Forestry Field Day 2005 is sponsored by the Nebraska Forest Service, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension, the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum.

For more information, contact Dennis Adams at (402) 472-5822 or go to <http://www.nfs.unl.edu/NFSCalendar.htm>.

Tree and Landscape Maintenance Workshop, Sept. 29

The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, the Nebraska Forest Service and University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension are cooperating to conduct a series of tree and landscape maintenance workshops across the state, including one at the UNL Agricultural Research Center near Mead on Sept. 29 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Registration begins at 8 a.m.

The workshops are intended for anyone who helps plant or care for trees and important green spaces such as parks, school grounds, college campuses, fairgrounds, golf courses, cemeteries, acreages, etc. Professional CEUs offered for Certified Arborists, Turf-Care Professionals & Park and Recreation Professionals.

The workshops will provide the latest information on such topics as weed/pest identification and control, disease management, basics of tree and shrub pruning, maintenance of landscape beds, effective mulching, and tips for growing trees and turf in harmony. The workshops will include indoor classroom sessions, outdoor tours and hands-on demonstrations.

Cost includes lunch and educational materials: \$35 if received by Sept. 16, \$50 after. For more information or registration form, call 472-2971 or go to <http://arboretum.unl.edu/>.