



Economical Control of Bush Honeysuckle

Mist Blower Herbicide Application Method

Asian bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera maackii*, *L. tatarica*, *L. morrowii*) are invasive, woody shrubs that form dense stands in environments ranging from sun to shade and from wet to dry soils. Bush honeysuckle is often found on disturbed sites, forest edges and interiors, floodplains, fields, pastures, and roadsides.

Populations range across much of the eastern third of Kansas, with significant local infestations across the state. The shrub out-competes native plants for sunlight and resources, reducing species diversity, negatively impacting wildlife habitat, and decreasing local ecosystem functionality.

Treatment Options

Several treatment options exist. Area of the affected site, size of the bush honeysuckle within the stand, desired season for treatment, and other factors affect the choice of control methods. Treatments fall into one of two categories: mechanical or chemical. No biological controls currently exist.

Mechanical Treatment

Mechanical removal can be performed year-round, depending on ease of access to the site.

Hand pulling and removal of seedlings and small plants is effective in light infestations, but larger equipment may be needed for robust, dense stands of bush honeysuckle.



A typical infestation of bush honeysuckle in a Kansas woodland. The area on the left of the photo has been treated, while the stand on the right is untreated.

Loppers, saws, and leverage devices work well.

Bush honeysuckle has a shallow, fibrous root system that readily resprouts after being cut back. Complete removal may be needed to limit regrowth.

Mechanical removal may result in soil disturbance, so care should be taken on steep slopes and sites prone to erosion.

Chemical Treatment

Often used in combination with mechanical removal, chemical treatment is effective to control large areas of bush honeysuckle.

Spot spraying with a 1 to 2 percent solution of glyphosate is effective — especially on regrowth from previously cut stems — carefully avoiding overspray on nontarget species.

To limit effects on other plants, consider spraying in late fall, when only bush honeysuckle bears green leaves and desirable native plants are dormant.

Larger stands can be treated by applying a 25 percent solution of glyphosate to stems that have been cut at ground level. Application from late summer through the dormant season is effective.

Cut-stump treatment with triclopyr (products such as “Garlon”) is most effective in late winter. It is more effective at controlling large bush honeysuckles with stems that are larger in diameter.

Picloram (“Tordon,” for example) controls bush honeysuckle infestations, but can result in unintentional tree kill and must be applied with caution in wooded areas.

Advantages of Mist Blowers

Recently, a new method has emerged as the leading technique to treat infestations of bush honeysuckle: the use of backpack mist blowers to apply glyphosate.

Perhaps more than any other method, mist blowing offers effective control at a low cost per acre by decreasing the time spent and possibly cost of chemicals. A backpack mist blower allows for quick treatment of large areas without a decrease in effectiveness. It is common to treat 1 to 2 acres per hour effectively with little impact on nontarget species when applied at the correct time of year.

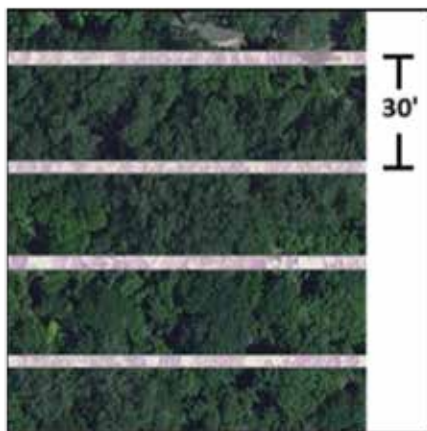
The window for mist blower treatment is in late fall, when native plants have gone dormant and only

bush honeysuckle retains its leaves. This allows for highly targeted application to the invasive species and limits impact on native plants.

In Kansas, the window for mist blower herbicide application is often late October through mid-November. Temperatures as low as 40 degrees have not reduced honeysuckle mortality after treatment.

Large areas can be treated more effectively by clearing “alleys” through dense stands to allow for access. Assuming the mist has an effective reach of 15 feet (may vary based on equipment and conditions), alleys would need to be created every 30 feet or so. (*See diagram, below.*)

Alleys can be created with hand tools on small stands but powered



Glyphosate herbicide is applied to a stand of bush honeysuckle using a backpack mist blower. As with all pesticide application, label-recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) should always be worn.

equipment, such as a skid-steer with forestry head, may be needed to clear large sites.

Application Rates

Glyphosate is available in many formulations and brands, but not all are labeled for use in mist blowers. Consult the label for approved use.

For treating riparian woodlands, wetlands, or sensitive areas near water, consider aquatic formulations (such as “Rodeo”).

Most common label rates for mist blower-applied glyphosate vary between 4 to 10 percent, but effective control has been achieved using 8 to 10 percent rates. No surfactant is required.

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