

To: Norton Telegram Sheridan Sentinel
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Time for Musk Thistle and Bineweed

Both musk thistle and bindweed are noxious weeds and this fall is an excellent time for treating them. Musk thistle is primarily a biennial or winter annual species. Biennials take two growing seasons to complete their life cycle. Thistles that germinate in the spring will spend the entire summer as a rosette, live through the winter, and bolt the next year in May and June. Fall is an excellent time to spray musk thistle as all are in the rosette stage of growth. Another advantage for treatment in the fall is reduced risk of off-target drift. Waiting until most deciduous trees have lost their leaves and most crops are harvested will greatly reduce the likelihood of damage from herbicide drift. The spraying window in the fall probably extends until the ground is frozen and the musk thistle plants have shut down activity. However, the plants are susceptible to herbicides as long as green tissue exists. Studies in Kansas indicated that a fall application can be the best time to control and manage thistle.

Bindweed is notoriously difficult to control, especially with a single herbicide application. In the fall, before a hard killing frost, can be an excellent time to treat field bindweed especially in a year when good fall moisture has been received. This perennial weed is moving carbohydrate deep into its root system during this period, which can assist the movement of herbicide. The most effective control program includes preventive measures over several years in conjunction with persistent and timely herbicide applications. The use of competitive crops such as winter wheat or forage sorghum may aid control. No-till has been very beneficial for managing bindweed by providing routine herbicide treatments through time and not breaking up the root system and dragging root segments around the fields. There are several herbicides alone or in various combinations registered for suppression or control of field bindweed in fallow and/or in certain crops, pastures, and rangeland. Apply each herbicide or herbicide mixture according to directions, warnings, and precautions on the product label(s). Single herbicide applications rarely eliminate established bindweed stands. However, labeled herbicide applications are most effective when applied in the fall. Herbicide treatments are least effective when applied when bindweed plants are stressed. For a list of chemicals contact your herbicide dealers or go to KSRE.ksu.edu and search for SRP 1139 Chemical Weed Control.