



## ALBERTA NATIVE PLANT COUNCIL HERBICIDE USE POLICY

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Alberta Native Plant Council (ANPC) does not support indiscriminate use of herbicides, but recognizes that there are situations where use is warranted.

A possible example would be the onset of invasion of native habitat by an invasive alien plant species:

- that is known (from other sites) to form monocultures at the cost of native diversity and
- in circumstances that make other forms of control impractical.

ANPC recognizes that because invasive non-native plant species can pose risks to natural habitats, herbicide may sometimes be the best choice. The use of labour intensive methods of control may limit how much area can be treated, thereby saving small areas at the cost of neglecting larger ones. Inability to apply available resources to a larger area is a cost to be counted against more labour-intensive methods, just as exposure to toxins and pollution of the environment are costs to be counted against the use of toxic or persistent herbicides.

ANPC does not support widespread, untargeted use of herbicide on native ecosystems for any purpose, including the suppression of one native species to favour other, more economic species. Broad spraying with herbicide to kill plants that compete with conifer seedlings for reforestation, or to kill shrubs and trees under power lines, are examples of untargeted herbicide use; this type of spraying impacts many species of native plants in the affected area, including any that are rare, endangered or threatened.

The ANPC Herbicide Use Policy is concerned with the maintenance of native plant species and the integrity and diversity of natural habitats. As such, ANPC suggests the following principles:

### **Principle 1. Eliminate unnecessary and/or ineffective use of herbicides, and uses for cosmetic purposes.**

- When possible, use methods other than herbicides to control unwanted species.
- Avoid using herbicides on lawns, gardens, and other manicured landscapes (cosmetic uses), particularly in urban areas where more people will be exposed to potential harmful side effects.
- If herbicide is used in a particular setting, the results should be monitored. If the application of herbicide is not having the desired result, use should stop.
- Evaluate the need for control of particular species. Not all non-native species have significant effects on natural biodiversity.
- Consider taking no action and accepting the non-native species of concern as part of the system.

### **Principle 2. Carefully consider the impacts of any proposed use of herbicides**

- Review available information on effectiveness and potential harm before selecting a method of control.
- Choose the option best suited to control the target species, taking into consideration that herbicides vary widely in toxicity and persistence in the environment
- Give priority to sites where invasion by non-natives is at an early stage over those where invasion is already extensive.

### **Principle 3. Use herbicide in a targeted manner**

- Use herbicides as selectively possible, preferably on the targeted species only.
- Avoid broadcast applications