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Headline: Troublesome Pasture Plant of the Week – Multiflora Rose



Hermitage, MO - Multiflora Rose has always been a thorn in the side of most livestock producers often found in hay fields and grazing pastures. This invasive perennial sticker bush can form heavy thickets in fields and along fencerows greatly reducing the grazing efficiency in those areas. When found in hay fields it can decrease the feeding value of the hay as it is rolled up in the bale. Multiflora Rose was introduced to the US as an ornamental shrub and was at one time thought to be used as a living fence row like those seen in other countries. This plant, most often spread by birds through seeds and can be found in pastures, fencerows, hayfields as well as along most road ditches here in the Ozarks. The plant knows no boundaries.

This pinnately compound leaf can be divided into five to eleven serrated leaflets which occur alternately on the stem. Each plant will have multiple hook shaped thorns whorled around the stem making it a hard plant to deal with. The stipules of multiflora rose have feathery margins, unlike most native roses. Its erect stems may reach heights of more than ten feet standing alone and well over 15 feet if growing with support from fences and/or trees. The five to six petal white flowers are easily noticed in May and June. The root system is a vast fibrous one and wherever the cane touches the ground, for a prolonged period of time, the plant will root there as well. This plant has been known to support and carry a common viral disease known as rose rosette which effects our ornamental roses around the home place. Once the plants are affected there is no cure for the disease so the plant needs to be removed. Do not replant another rose in the same spot as it will contract the same disease again.

The only way to mechanically control Multiflora Rose is to dig up the entire plant which is not an easy process. Brushhogging, mowing, or topping the plant will have very little to no effect in controlling or killing the plant. Research has shown mowing three to six times per season for three to four years will only reduce the population and is found to be an expensive way of controlling it. The best control method is chemical through spot spraying although sheep and goats will make a real dent in it, over time, as they have the ability to graze on it. The best time to spray is when the plant is in flower with allot of leaf growth. Make sure you get the plant wet completely by going around the plant as much as possible. Some of the most effective herbicides to control Multiflora Rose are those containing metsulfuron such as Cimarron Max or Escort. Chemicals containing triclopyr like Remedy and Pasturegard work as well. My go to choice of controlling woody plants is Grazon P & D mixed with Remedy. For a 25-gallon spot spray rig mix 8 fluid ounces of Remedy with 2-2.5 pints of Grazon while adding 1 pint of a quality surfactant.

For more information on pasture plant identification, please contact your local MU Extension Agronomy Field Specialist.