

**SELECTIVE BRUSH CONTROL**  
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Professionals in the turf, landscape, or grounds maintenance industry are occasionally faced with controlling problem woody vegetation. The general term for woody plants that are considered weed problems is "brush". While any woody plant can be a weed if it is growing in the wrong spot, there are several fast growing, pioneer species that are routine problems. Some that come to mind include boxelder maple (*Acer negundo* L.), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima* (Mill.) Swingle), and black locust (*Robinia pseudo-acacia* L.), to name a few. Many times a great deal of time, labor, and money is wasted in trying to deal with this problem by routinely cutting the tree only to discover that it has resprouted and is growing profusely. There are several techniques and herbicides available to control these plants but I believe the one that offers the best fit for this industry is called the "basal bark" technique. This involves a herbicide mixed with a diluent and then applying the solution to the base of the tree at soil level and completely encircling the stem with the solution up to 12"-18" on the stem. It can be used to control standing trees or to control stumps from resprouting after cutting. To control stumps, treating the outside edges, exposed roots sections, and lip of the plant where the cambium is located is all that is required for control. There are many advantages to this system. Effective control only requires a small amount of solution per stem. Control is selective based on placement of the solution on specific stems so problem vegetation can be easily removed from desirable plants with no chance for off target injury. It can be applied at any time during the year which allows for application during the winter months when there are fewer labor and project pressures. The only requirements are that the stem must be dry and correct application is not impeded by ice or snow. The application equipment can be as simple as a 1 gallon hand sprayer or even a squirt bottle for treating stumps. Industrial applicators working on right of ways use backpack sprayers. One tank will normally last most of the day depending on stem density. The herbicide of choice is Garlon 4 from Dow/Elanco. The active ingredient is triclopyr which turf managers may recognize from some three-way mixes of broadleaf weed control products. Follow label directions for application suggestions and rate solutions. There are several diluents available which are designed for basal bark use which are composed of various petroleum oils. Diesel fuel or kerosene can also be used as diluents and are just as effective as the other oils.