

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

# APPEALING TO SIGHT AND SAFETY

**T**raveling cross-country, we revel in the scenery — the majestic redwoods of the Pacific Northwest, the mighty peaks of the Rocky Mountains, and the beauty of our sculptured roadsides.

While vegetation management, better known as weed and brush control, may not capture the sightseer's fancy, its role in improving efficiency, effectiveness and safety cannot be denied. It is a must for roadsides, plant sites, government installations, railroads and utilities.

At utility sites, for example, vegetation growth controls reduce the number of power outages and shortages, particularly in rainy, windy weather. While mowing and other mechanical methods keep weeds in check, specialty pesticides help achieve the desired results without undue hazard to valuable plants, the public or wildlife — at a cost much lower than mechanical methods alone. In Lowndes County, Miss., for example, a 4-year combination mowing/specialty pesticide roadside program saved the county \$110 per mile annually, compared to mowing alone. In a program that encompassed 650 miles of right-of-way, the annual savings totaled \$71,500.

However, the advantages of specialty pesticide vegetation management go beyond dollars and cents. Reduced frequency of mowing means fewer damaged windshields from flying debris and fewer traveler and worker injuries.

Specialty pesticides, used properly, control noxious weeds that threaten nearby crops and native vegetation. Their appropriate use in controlling undesirable weed growth also allows wildflowers and desired grasses to take root along right-of-ways.

Weed control also enhances travel conditions for the driving public.

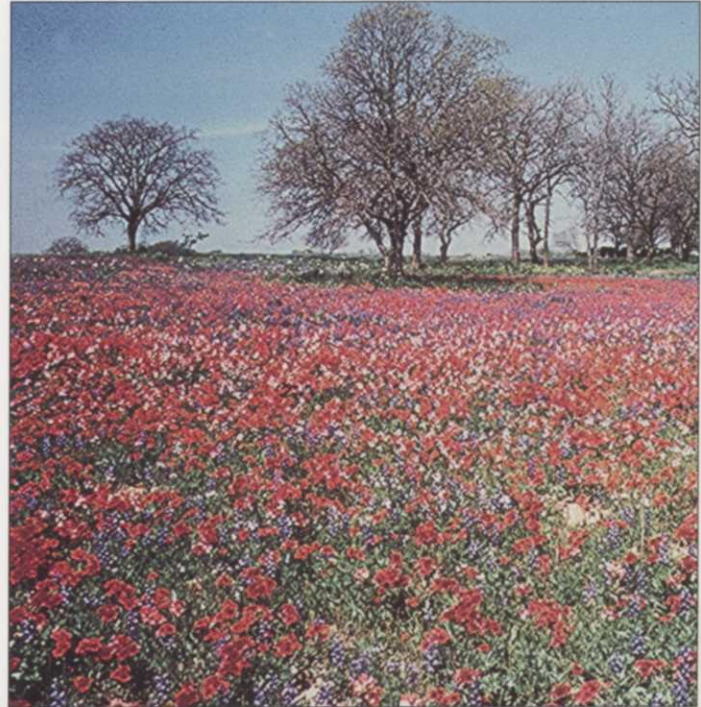
Studies indicate fewer collisions with wildlife occur when roadsides are clear. When vehicles accidentally leave the road, properly maintained roadsides provide needed space for emergency stops. Attractive median plantings also help drivers overcome the tendency to doze during long trips.

Vegetation management makes signs easier to see and lengthens sight distance. Road signs serve as safety warnings and travel guides. Safety hazards occur when such signs are hidden by trees and overgrown vegetation.

Likewise, drivers need good sight distance for safe stops and passing.

Vegetation management improves drainage, helps roads last longer and improves snow drift management. Overgrown weeds along the road shoulder prevent water from draining off rapidly.

While the absence of overgrown weeds may go unnoticed, the public safety and environmental benefits of vegetation management, bolstered by the use of specialty pesticides, are hard to miss.



**Specialty pesticides have allowed roadside managers to control noxious weeds and establish eye-catching wildflower programs.**

## D I D Y O U K N O W ?

Overgrown vegetation, whether alongside roads, railroads or public utilities, is unsightly and often unsafe. Aided by specialty pesticides and mechanical control methods, vegetation management:

- Eliminates noxious weeds. Many weeds, including bindweed, Canadian thistle, johnsongrass and kudzu, pose a serious threat to crops and other valuable plants. Some are poisonous to livestock. Specialty pesticides prevent overgrowth of problem weeds.
- Protects public safety. When well-maintained, vegetation in medians along city streets and highways provides a buffer zone against oncoming traffic. It also improves the scenery and breaks the monotony of a lengthy trip. Road signs are more readily visible when weeds are under control.
- Allows workers easy access to work sites. Controlling weed growth along railroad tracks and plant sites increases worker effectiveness and efficiency.