

Velvet Grass Control

CPOP Listserv Discussion

Herbicide control methods for velvet grass (*Holcus lanatus*).



Summary

In September, Ian Silvernail with the Institute for Applied Ecology asked the Listserv for their successful control methods for velvet grass (*Holcus lanatus*). Silvernail's attempts to control for velvet grass on a coastal prairie were successful in killing seedlings, but had no significant impact on mature plants. Several trials were conducted using different prescriptions of sethoxydim, clethodim, and methylated seed oil (MSO).

Rod Gilbert from Joint Base Lewis-McChord responded with his own recommendations on treating velvet grass. He suggested using Fusilade, but mentioned that timing is important: application should occur before the plants have developed culms and spikelets. Additionally, Gilbert mentioned that he used extra surfactant when treating grasses given their smaller surface area and that this was especially important when applying herbicide to velvet grass because the hairs on its leaves can cause the herbicide to sit on top of the plant. Dave Wilderman with Washington Department Natural Resources echoed Rod's suggestion, adding that he has successfully treated velvet grass with Fusilade in the fall, after some rains and the plants were well green. Gilbert also has used Glyphosate successfully, but is only effective before a plant has finished flowering.

Suggestions for control

- .75% Fusilade and .25% NuFilm surfactant

Applied before the plants have developed culms and spikelets, using extra surfactant. When treating velvet grass in the fall, application should occur after some rains when the plants are green.

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Original CPOP Listserv Messages

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September 19, 2014 – Ian Silvernail (Institute for Applied Ecology)

I'm curious to hear if anyone has any success stories controlling or at least significantly reducing mature velvet grass with a grass-specific herbicide. If so, please send on your formula, including quantity of surfactant and suggested timing of application.

We're working on a coastal prairie restoration that was seeded with sand fescue (*Festuca ammobia*) in February. Sand fescue acts like Roemer's, and is generally not impacted by grass-specific herbicides. So far, we have tried three things 1) broadcast application using 1 quart sethoxydim plus 1 pint MSO per acre in both spring and fall, 2) broadcast with 1 quart sethoxydim plus 1.5 pints MSO per acre in late spring (probably too late), and 3) a small test plot with a backpack sprayer using 1% clethodim and 1% MSO. None of these treatments were significantly impactful on mature velvet grass, but did kill seedlings. Also, neither mix negatively impacted the sand fescue.

Ian Silvernail
Botanist/Restoration Ecologist
Habitat Restoration Program
Institute for Applied Ecology

September 22, 2014 – Rod Gilbert (Joint Base Lewis-McChord)

Hi Ian,

We use Fusilade (fluazifop) on our invasive grasses (@.75% solution) and it controls most of them quite well if applied at the right time. Velvet grass and others like sweet vernal grass and tall oat grass, have to be sprayed before culms and spikelets emerge to be effective. If you wait until it is in flower, you will have very limited success. This means that you need to be able to identify it in its early stages and know where it is locally from the year before, to be effective in controlling it. I always add a little more surfactant with grasses when using a backpack sprayer as there's usually so little surface to stick to but especially on velvet grass as the hairs tend to make the herbicide sit on top of the leaf in droplets. Glyphosate also works well on vernal grass at almost any time of year (including on mature plants) except when it has finished flowering.

Rod Gilbert
Fish and Wildlife Program (Versar Inc)
Joint Base Lewis-McChord

September 22, 2014 – Dave Wilderman (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)

I've used Fusilade on velvet grass in the fall very successfully a few times. You have to wait until it is well greened-up, after some rains. We typically use .25% NuFilm surfactant with .75% Fusilade.

David Wilderman
Natural Areas Program Ecologist
Natural Areas Program
Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
