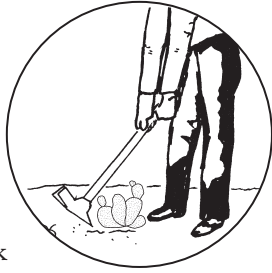


Brush Busters Top Removal Method

Cut the main root of pricklypear 2-4 inches below the soil surface with a grubbing hoe or shovel. Remove the detached plants from the area, or stack them on piles of brush.

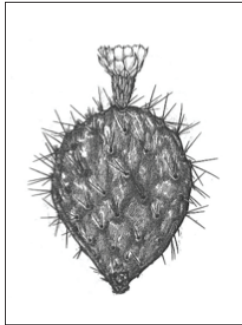


Remember, any pricklypear pads that come in contact with the ground have the ability to root and become new plants. Other types of cactus such as Tasajilo and Cholla are not easily controlled by hand grubbing because of their growth form and reinfestation from broken plant parts.

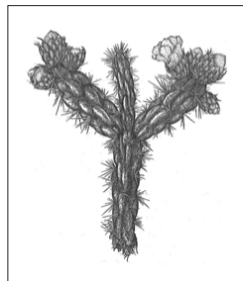
Cactus Identification



Tasajilo



Pricklypear



Cholla

Cactus Images courtesy of: "Trees, Shrubs and Woody Vines of the Southwest" by Robert A. Vines, Illustrated by Sarah Kahlden Arendale, Copyright ©1960

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Revision

TEXAS A&M
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EXTENSION



How to Control **PRICKLYPEAR** and other Cacti

A safe, simple and effective three-step way to control pricklypear, tasajillo and other types of cacti on small and large acreages

Individual Plant Treatment Series

James Jackson, Extension Program Specialist
Robert Lyons, Professor and Extension Range Specialist

The Texas A&M University System

Brush Busters Pad or Stem Spray Method

Pricklypear and other species of cacti may interfere with movement and handling of livestock and with forage utilization, cause serious livestock health problems, and compete with desirable forage plants. These plants are extremely tolerant of drought and harsh conditions and are protected from grazing animals to some extent by their spines. Pricklypear and other species of cacti thrive across the western half of Texas in rural pasture and urban lots. They have the ability to grow and to increase in abundance very rapidly.

These two methods to control pricklypear and other cacti are easy, inexpensive, environmentally responsible and effective. One Brush Busters method involves spraying directly on the pads or stems of the individual plants. By following the simple three-step directions you'll be able to selectively control prickly pear and other cacti without damaging your desirable trees, shrubs, forbs or grasses. The second method uses no herbicide, and controls the plant by simple top removal.

Controlling prickly pear and cacti is not a one-time job. There are many viable seeds in the soil that may germinate in the future. Livestock and wildlife also spread the seeds and scatter the pads across large areas making it necessary to go over your land occasionally to get rid of unwanted seedlings as they emerge.

Remember as you control prickly pear that it has some wildlife value in terms of food and cover. Animals such as quail, deer and javelinas benefit from small amounts of pricklypear in the pasture; however, when it creates a monoculture it is of little benefit to any wildlife species. By using the Brush Busters method you have the ability to be selective controlling the ones you don't want while leaving the ones that you do want.

Professionals with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and AgriLife Research, have developed and approved these Brush Busters methods for pricklypear and cacti control. The results that you achieve may vary depending on the weather and other conditions, however; you should be able to control seven of the ten prickly pear treated.



Works best: On relatively thin stands of pricklypear, tasajillo and other types of cacti.

When to apply: The Brush Busters pad or stem spray method can be applied throughout the year. The herbicides used in Brush Busters are Summount or Trooper Pro which are absorbed through the pads and stems and through the roots after rains have moved the herbicide into the soil. Absence of rainfall for extended periods after spraying may reduce plant-mortality.

1. Prepare equipment

Any type of sprayer can be used for prickly pear control; however backpack sprayers or sprayers mounted on ATVs work best. Backpack sprayers are good for small areas with dense stands and sprayers mounted on ATVs are best for large areas. Make sure your sprayer has a nozzle capable of delivering a coarse spray (large droplets). A fan-type nozzle may be more efficient for large plants, but an adjustable conjet nozzle such as the Spraying Systems Co. Conejet 5500-X6 or -X8 will be more efficient for smaller plants.

2. Mix herbicide spray

Seventy-six to 100 percent mortality can be achieved on pricklypear and other cacti by spraying an herbicide with the active ingredients picloram + fluroxypyr.

To prepare the spray mix, add the herbicide at a rate of 1 percent concentration to water. To ensure good coverage of pads and stems add a non-ionic surfactant to the spray mix (see table below). It will also help to add a spray marking dye, such as Hi-Lite™ Blue Dye to mark plants sprayed and see if you are getting an adequate amount of spray on the green pads or stems.

3. Spray the Pricklypear

Spraying prickly pear can be done anytime of the year, except during extremely cold weather. Apply to the plant to the point where the pads and stems of the plant are wet, but not to the point of runoff. Results will be faster and more consistent if both sides of the pricklypear pads are sprayed. The Hi-Light Blue dye will be most effective if the plants are treated in the winter time when the grass growing in and around the prickly pear plants are dormant. due to cold weather.

	Spray solution	3 gal	14 gal	25 gal
Summount or Trooper Pro	1%	4 oz.	18 oz.	1 qt.
Surfactant	¼%	1 oz.	5 oz.	8 oz.
Hi-Lite Blue Dye	¼- ½%	1-2 oz.	5-9 oz.	8-16 oz.

All spray solutions are mixed in water.

Keep these points in mind:

- The purchase and use of any herbicide containing the active ingredient picloram requires a Pesticide Applicator License from the Texas Department of Agriculture. See your County Extension Agent for license information.
- Always follow herbicide label directions.
- Pricklypear dies very slowly. After application it may take up to 2-3 years for total plant mortality to occur.
- Do not spray when pads or stems are wet.
- Do not spray when the air temperature is below 60° F.
- Do not spray if you are working immediately upwind of desirable trees, shrubs, or susceptible crops.
- Do not spray if you are within a 100 feet of known sinkholes that would allow the herbicide to enter underground water aquifers.
- To avoid damage to desirable trees such as live oak or pecan, do not spray dense pricklypear or other cacti growing beneath these trees.
- Cost of treatment rapidly increase as the size and density of prickly pear increases.
- Do not spray within 20 yards of endangered plants. Check with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service if you need information on endangered or threatened plants in your area.
- Large pricklypear plants may be used as nesting sites for quail in areas where bunchgrass is limited. Other wildlife such as deer or javelin may also use pricklypear as a food source.