

INVASIVE PLANTS
IN WISCONSIN

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Invasive plants can thrive and aggressively spread beyond their natural range, disrupting ecosystems. The *Management of Invasive Plants in Wisconsin* series explains how to identify invasive plants and provides common management options. Management methods recommend specific timings for treatment, as well as expected effectiveness. For more information, go to: fyi.uwex.edu/weedsci/category/invasive-plants-of-wisconsin.

Sericea lespedeza

(*Lespedeza cuneata*)

Sericea lespedeza is an erect, perennial legume that grows 3–6' tall. Each plant has one or more stems with hairs along ridges. These stems can be woody.

Legal classification in Wisconsin:

Prohibited

Leaves: Alternate and compound with three leaflets that are 0.25–1" in length. Leaves are widest in the middle and taper to points at either end with flat hairs along the midrib. Leaves have petioles near the bottom of the plant and are attached directly to the stem (sessile) at the top of the plant. Grayish-green to silvery in color.

Flowers: Middle to late summer. Found in clusters of 2–3 growing where the leaf attaches to the stem (leaf axil) in the upper half of the plant. Creamy white or yellow with a purple or pink tube and 0.25–0.40" in length.

Fruits and seeds: Oval pod is 0.125" long with a pointed end.

Roots: Woody taproot 3–4' deep with lateral branches.

Similar species: Other plants in the genus *Lespedeza* (both native and non-native) can look similar to *sericea lespedeza*. Of particular note is slender bush clover (*L. virginica*; native, threatened), which has clusters of purple to pink flowers and brown stems. Round-headed bush clover (*L. capitata*; native) is another similar species that is common to prairie habitats. This plant can be distinguished from *sericea lespedeza* by flowers that grow in dense clusters at the tip of the stem.

Ecological threat:

- Invades open woodlands, savannas, grasslands, prairies, old fields, pastures, fencerows, drainage areas, wetland borders, roadsides, and other disturbed areas.
- Used for erosion control and as a forage species.

Non-chemical control Removal

Effectiveness in season: 90–100%
Season after treatment: 50–70%

Pulling when soil conditions allow for the removal of the entire root is an effective single plant control technique. This is most appropriate for seedlings and young plants since older plants develop a deep taproot. If seeds are present, bag material and dispose of it in a landfill to avoid potential for seed spread.

Mowing

Effectiveness in season: 50–70%
Season after treatment: < 50%

Mowing during the flower bud stage, but before seeds are formed, can suppress *lespedeza*. Monitor populations and repeat mowing each time target plants reach 12–18" in height. Two or three years of mowing typically suppresses established populations. Take care not to mow when mature seeds are present to avoid seed spread.

Prescribed burning

Effectiveness in season: < 50%
Season after treatment: < 50%

Spring burns can kill germinating seedlings and can suppress above-ground growth of established plants, depending on fire intensity. After the fire, there may be a flush of new growth as seeds are scarified by fire, and established plants will quickly resprout and reinvade areas. Summer burns, when lespedeza has begun to flower, are most effective for suppression. However, summer burning can adversely affect desirable species. Neither time is recommended unless integrated with other techniques. Fire may benefit other species well-adapted to this management (e.g., prairie grasses), resulting in improved competition with lespedeza. A handheld propane torch can be effective for treating seedlings.

Grazing

Effectiveness in season: < 50%
Season after treatment: < 50%

Cattle only forage on early growth, but can suppress lespedeza under high stocking rates, especially after a spring burn. Goats browse lespedeza and can eliminate adult plants in a population after three years of grazing under heavy stocking rates. Goats severely suppress seed production as well. If seed is consumed, do not move animals to uninfested areas for at least 24 hours to prevent further spread.



Chemical control

Foliar

Apply directly to individual plants or broadcast across an infested area. Broadcasted foliar applications are typically the most cost-effective treatment in dense infestations. Use lower rates on smaller plants and less dense populations and higher rates on larger plants and denser populations. With this species, herbicide absorption can be limited, resulting in reduced effectiveness. Including a recommended surfactant can alleviate any potential reduction in effectiveness.

clopyralid*

Effectiveness in season: < 50%
Season after treatment: < 50%

Common name: Transline

Rate:

broadcast: 10–21 fl oz/A
 (0.25–0.5 lb a.e./A)
spot: 0.2–0.5% (0.005–0.015 lb a.e./gal)

Timing: Apply when target species is actively growing and fully leafed out. Applications during the flower bud stage are most effective.

Caution: Do not apply directly to water or to areas where surface water is present. Use of this chemical in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow, may result in groundwater contamination. Remains in soil for up to one year, depending on application rate. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided since even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants. Do not compost treated plants since herbicide can persist through composting process.

fluroxypyr*

Effectiveness in season: 70–90%
Season after treatment: 50–70%

Common name: Vista XRT

Rate:

broadcast: 6–12 fl oz/A
 (0.13–0.25 lb a.e./A)
spot: 0.1–0.2 % (0.003–0.005 lb a.e./gal)

Timing: Apply when target species is actively growing and fully leafed out. Applications during the flower bud stage are most effective.

Caution: Do not apply directly to water or to areas where surface water is present. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided since even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.

glyphosate*

Effectiveness in season: 70–90%
Season after treatment: 50–70%

Common name: Roundup

Rate:

broadcast: 1.0–2.0 lb a.e./A
spot: For a 3 lb a.e./gal product.
 1–2% (0.03–0.06 lb a.e./gal)

Timing: Apply when target species is actively growing and fully leafed out. Applications during the flower bud stage are most effective.

Caution: Use product labeled for aquatic use if potential exists for solution to contact surface waters. Applications can result in bare ground since glyphosate is not selective. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided since even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.

metsulfuron*

Effectiveness in season: 50–70%
Season after treatment: 50–70%

Common name: Escort

Rate:

broadcast: 0.3–0.5 oz/A

(0.2–0.3 oz a.i./A)

spot: 0.04 oz/gal (0.02 oz a.i./gal)

Timing: Apply when target species is blooming until killing frost.

Caution: Do not apply directly to water or to areas where surface water is present. Remains in the soil for months, depending on application rate. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided since even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.

picloram*

Effectiveness in season: 50–70%
Season after treatment: 50–70%

Common name: Tordon K

Some products containing picloram are restricted-use in Wisconsin.

Rate:

broadcast: 32–64 fl oz/A

(0.5–1 lb a.e./A)

spot: Equivalent to broadcast rates.

Timing: Apply when target species is actively growing and fully leafed out. Applications during the flower bud stage are most effective.

Caution: Do not apply directly to water or to areas where surface water is present. Use of this chemical in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow, may result in groundwater contamination. Remains in the soil for more than one year, depending on application rate, and has the potential to contaminate surface runoff water during this timeframe. Maintenance of a vegetative buffer strip is recommended between the areas picloram is applied and surface water features. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided since even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants. Do not compost treated plants since herbicide can persist through composting process.

triclopyr*

Effectiveness in season: 70–90%
Season after treatment: 50–70%

Common name: Garlon 4

Rate:

broadcast: 16–24 fl oz/A

(0.50–0.75 lb a.e./A)

spot: 1–2% (0.04–0.08 lb a.e./gal)

Timing: Apply when target species is actively growing and fully leafed out. Applications during the flower bud stage are most effective.

Caution: Use product labeled for aquatic use if potential exists for solution to contact surface waters. Use of this chemical in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow, may result in groundwater contamination. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided since even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.

triclopyr + fluroxypyr*

Effectiveness in season: 70–90%
Season after treatment: 70–90%

Common name: Pasturegard HL

Rate:

broadcast: 12–24 fl oz/A

(triclopyr: 0.3–0.55 lb a.e./A + fluroxypyr: 0.1–0.2 lb a.e./A)

spot: 0.4% (triclopyr: 0.01 lb a.e./gal + fluroxypyr: 0.004 lb a.e./gal)

Timing: Apply when target species is actively growing and fully leafed out. Applications during the flower bud stage are most effective.

Caution: Do not apply directly to water or to areas where surface water is present. Use of this chemical in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow, may result in groundwater contamination. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided since even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.



*Active ingredient (a.i.)



Herbicide information is based on label rates and reports by researchers and land managers. Products known to provide effective control or in common use are included. Those that do not provide sufficient control or lack information for effectiveness on target species have been omitted.

References to pesticide products in this publication are for your convenience and not an endorsement of one product instead of a similar product. You are responsible for using pesticides in accordance with the label directions. *Read the label before any application.*



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