

# Using Herbicides as Part of a IVM Plan

Herbicides are an important part of any Integrated Vegetation Management Plan. We use this tool carefully and judiciously, by following these important guidelines on our properties:

- Employing rigorously trained, licensed, teams of professionally trained applicators to ensure safe handling and precise applications to only targeted trees and brush
- Evaluating sites PRIOR to conducting vegetation management operations—ensuring that the right mechanical tool or herbicide product is used for the site.
- Spot spraying brush whenever possible to preserve desirable plants
- Controlling invasive species infestations early before they spread and degrade additional habitat. Early detection and control will reduce the amount of herbicide needed in the long term.
- Using only EPA-registered herbicides, observing all label directions. This includes using only aquatically registered products where water is present.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Information on noxious weeds (invasive species) can be found at: MN Department of Agriculture:**

[www.mda.state.mn.us/weedcontrol](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/weedcontrol)

**Rager, Mary, Adams, Laurie D., and Wojcik, Vicki. 2013. Monarch Habitat Development on Utility Rights of Way. Pollinator Partnership.**

[org/images/uploads/documents/Monarch.Habitat.Manual.ROW.NEast.ver16pdf](http://org/images/uploads/documents/Monarch.Habitat.Manual.ROW.NEast.ver16pdf)

**The USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service: Information on native plant materials for creating pollinator habitat.**

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/plantsanimals/pollinate/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/plantsanimals/pollinate/)

**The Xerces Society: Guidance on providing nesting sites, creating and managing pollinator habitats, and regional information about plants for pollinators**

[www.xerces.org/guidelines/pollinators-and-roadsides/](http://www.xerces.org/guidelines/pollinators-and-roadsides/)

**Minnesota Department of Agriculture: Pollinator Best Management Practices for Roadsides and Other Rights-of-Way.**

[www.mda.state.mn.us/protecting/bmps/~media/Files/protecting/bmps/pollinators/pollinatorbmpsroad.pdf](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/protecting/bmps/~media/Files/protecting/bmps/pollinators/pollinatorbmpsroad.pdf)

**Electric Coops & Energy Providers: Managing Our Rights of Way. Addl Brochures available by contacting:**

[www.mnpie.org](http://www.mnpie.org)



## Questions or Concerns?

We hope this information has helped you to better understand our challenge to provide a safe, reliable power supply, while at the same time respecting and protecting the environment we all live in. If you have additional questions, please contact:

Arrowhead Cooperative  
(800) 864-3744  
[newsletter@arrowhead.coop](mailto:newsletter@arrowhead.coop)

## ELECTRIC COOPS & ENERGY PROVIDERS:

### Managing our Rights-of-Way



## What We Do

Everyday in Minnesota crews are working on utility corridors to effectively manage vegetation. Trees must be kept back from powerlines to prevent power outages, and unsafe conditions for the public. Corridors must be easily accessible for maintenance and repair work. Overgrown vegetation can lead to:

- Longer power restoration times following storm events
- Trees and branches falling onto powerlines—the most frequent reason for service interruptions
- Limited access and safety issues, for powerline inspection, maintenance and repair
- Unsafe access to electrical lines, endangering children and animals

## Our Vegetation Management Story

Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) is the key to our success. Years of experience has shown that using mechanical methods in combination with herbicides is the most efficient way to keep powerlines and rights of way clear.

Mechanical methods like mowing can be used effectively in certain areas for establishing or

reclaiming overgrown corridors. However, mowing damages the low-growth plant communities we strive to preserve—disturbing the soil surface, and creating the potential for erosion. In addition, mowing encourages the spread of invasive species—removing only the plant tops and leaving roots intact. This promotes rapid resprouting and seeds are spread throughout the area.

Herbicides, when used, enable control of the entire plant and often require one application every few years. Herbicides remove undesirable weeds, brush and trees and promote the growth of desirable grasses and wildflowers by removing competition for sunlight, moisture and nutrients.

Once grasslands are established, selective mechanical mowing, and/or spot-treatments with herbicides, can be used to remove unwanted brush.



## Establishing Pollinator Friendly Habitat on our Rights-of-Way

Using IVM, whenever possible, helps establish, pollinator-friendly habitat on our rights-of-way. We understand this is important to the communities where we live and work. We see this as a unique opportunity to contribute to the nationwide effort to restore pollinator populations.

The decline in pollinator populations is widely recognized and public awareness of the importance of native habitat has significantly increased. Over the last several years, the federal government, the state of Minnesota, environmental organizations, the public and the media have actively been taking measures to solve the problem. As a group, Rural Electric Coops and energy providers want to lead by example.

## What is a Pollinator?

Pollinators, such as honey bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and bats, assist plants in reproduction by transferring pollen. This allows the plant to produce berries, nuts and other foods important to the survival of many species of wildlife and the world's food supply.



## What is Pollinator-Friendly Habitat?

Recently there have been many reports of a steady decline in the population of pollinators. The decline is due in large part to the loss of habitat they need to survive.

Rights-of-Way are important habitats for pollinators. They are often the only habitats available in intensely managed agricultural areas, and serve as corridors that connect larger patches of habitat.

Our goal is to have our utility Rights-of-Way contain a diverse mix of compact flowering shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants. This helps the landscape become more resilient to weather extremes such as drought, floods and harsh winters. Managing for healthy, diverse vegetation provides food and nesting sites for pollinators.