



Centre for  
Ecology & Hydrology

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

Centre for Aquatic Plant Management

## Information Sheet: 32 Chemical Control Of Trees On River Banks

Trees and shrubs on river banks can cause problems by obstructing access, impeding navigational access for

mooring, destabilising fabricated structures with invasive root growth and increasing shading of the water.

Mechanical control of trees and management of bankside trees, such as willows, poplars and alders is dealt with elsewhere. This sheet provides information on chemical control of trees and shrubs near water.

There are two main methods of control. Direct application of a herbicide to the growing tree, or cut stump treatment.

**Direct Application:** Small trees and young bushes are susceptible to glyphosate. It should be applied between August and October for best effect according to the label instructions. This chemical is the preferred option where there is a lot of vegetation overhanging the water and where spray drift into water cannot be avoided without extreme care.

**Cut-Stump Treatment:** Timing is absolutely critical for this procedure. Trees and scrub should be cut with a saw or flail mower and then painted **within 20 minutes** with a 1 in 10 dilution of Roundup Pro Biactive to achieve successful control. If the time interval is any longer then the wound will start to heal over reducing ingress of the herbicide into the tree trunk. Increased ingress can be achieved by drilling holes in the stump or by cutting it with an axe to increase the cut surface area. All cut surfaces should be painted with herbicide.

Garlon 4 (containing triclopyr) is also approved for use as both a foliage spray and as a cut stump treatment. The product carries a buffer zone restriction of 1 m if applied by hand held knapsack, so that trees within 1 m of the edge of the water cannot be treated with this compound.

In experiments carried out by the CAPM on hawthorn and willow, there was no difference in efficacy between Garlon 4 and Roundup Pro Biactive. However, for control of *Rhododendron ponticum* over 1.8 m tall, foliage spray and follow up cut stump treatment with Garlon 4 is the most effective method.

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