

DESTRUCTIVE PRACTICES

CITY OF WEST FARGO | FORESTRY

HERBICIDE MISUSE:

Herbicides can be effective tools for controlling unwanted weeds in the landscape. However, in recent years there has been an increase in herbicide damage to trees and landscape plants.

DAMAGE SYMPTOMS

- Deformed foliage
 - Twisted, curled or stunted stem and branch growth
 - Clusters of stunted shoots or leaves
 - Discolored foliage
 - Leaf Scorch
 - Defoliation
 - Branch dieback or death of entire tree
- Drift: Herbicides can move through the air from the site of application to nearby areas, causing damage to trees and other plants.
 - Warmer temperatures increase volatility
 - Root uptake: Tree damage can also occur through root uptake from herbicides that move through the soil.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- Read and follow ALL herbicide label directions
- Be aware of surrounding properties with sensitive vegetation
- Most damage occurs in the spring - try to shift weed control to fall.
- Monitor temperature, wind speed, and wind direction. Avoid spraying on warm, windy days.
- Adjust sprayer nozzles to a coarser spray to reduce drift.
- Be careful using herbicides that control "woody brush"
- Keep in mind the extensive reach of tree root systems
- Use caution when treating stumps located near desirable trees
- Use alternate methods of weed control such as cultivation, mulching, use of cover crops and mowing weedy tree sprouts.

MOWING AROUND TREES

When mowers scrape or cut into the tree, this chips away at the tree's surface and makes it less able to defend itself against the elements. It is also damaging to mow over the roots, as the blades can tear into them. It is easy for the mower to damage the bark, which is especially harmful considering that bark is the tree's first line of defense. When your mower or trimmer scrapes away at the tree's base, this can damage/prevent the movement of nutrients up and down the tree's trunk, ultimately killing the tree.

HOW SHOULD YOU MOW AROUND TREES?

- **BEFORE MOWING:** clear away any twigs, branches, or other debris.
 - Designate an area of three to five feet around the perimeter of the tree.
- **WHEN MOWING:** Slow down your pace, ensuring that you do not come into contact with the tree.
 - If you do have grass around the exposed roots of the tree, raise the mower up to a level that it won't hit the roots.
 - It is best NOT to install edging around trees, as this can interfere with the roots and impede their growth.
- **AFTER MOWING:** Using a trimmer, with a guard, will help maintain areas around trees that the mower cannot reach. It is vital that the trimmer doesn't damage the bark, make use of the trimmers guard.
 - **TIP:** Installing a mulch ring around the tree can help prevent mowers and trimmers from even getting close to the trunk.



Exposed surface roots.