

Spring habitat restoration season brings a reminder, a list of resources

As snow melts, soils thaw and signs of spring emerge across the state's prairies, savannas, forests and wetlands, landowners, conservation workers and natural resource professionals prepare to begin habitat restoration and management activities.

Spring is one of the most important times of year for native vegetation establishment and habitat management, when careful planning helps to ensure that restoration projects succeed and support Minnesota's wildlife, pollinators and natural ecosystems.

On the cusp of this restoration season, here is a reminder about chemical formulations, which can affect new seedings' germination and establishment, and a note about free resources available on the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR) website.

Herbicides play an important role in site preparation for native vegetation establishment by controlling existing undesirable species that would otherwise compete with native species. Reducing this unwanted competition and creating open growing conditions allows native vegetation to successfully germinate and establish a resilient and diverse plant community.

Herbicide selection is an important consideration when



A contractor used mechanical methods and herbicide to control invasive species' regrowth and prepare a Renville County site for a prescribed fire and interseeding. Photo Credit: Jason Beckler, BWSR

BWSR Restoration Resources

BWSR provides several widely used technical tools designed to support successful native vegetation establishment and habitat management, helping to ensure that restoration projects across Minnesota contribute to healthy natural areas and resilient wildlife habitat. Among them:

[Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines](#)
[BWSR Native Seed Mixes](#)
[Pollinator and Biodiversity Toolbox](#)
[What's Working for Conservation](#)

preparing sites for native plantings or management activities. Products are typically described using two naming conventions.

The common name identifies the active ingredient — such as Glyphosate, Triclopyr or Imazapyr.

The trade or brand name — such as Roundup, Garlon or Remedy — is the name the manufacturer assigns to the marketed product.

Products may contain the same active ingredient but

have different brand names.

The most important information is the active ingredient listed on the label, which determines how the herbicide behaves and what plants it controls.

Previously, a lot of Roundup products for lawns and gardens contained glyphosate, a common herbicide often used to prepare a site for planting native vegetation. But some newer formulations now contain triclopyr instead of glyphosate — a change that may have gone unnoticed,

potentially affecting restoration projects.

Because glyphosate works by foliar uptake and becomes inactive when it binds to soil particles, native seed typically can be planted relatively soon before or after application if label instructions are followed. Unlike glyphosate, some triclopyr formulations can have persistent effects.

This residual activity can affect native species' germination and establishment. If seeding happens too quickly after treatment, it can be especially tough on forbs and shrubs. Practitioners should always review herbicide labels carefully and verify the active ingredient before use.

As restoration activities begin this spring, landowners and practitioners are also encouraged to use available technical resources to help guide project planning and management. By using sound management practices and the technical resources available through BWSR, landowners and practitioners can help to restore and protect Minnesota's natural areas. This, in turn, helps to support wildlife, pollinators and healthy ecosystems, which is good for the environment and benefits future generations.

BWSR staff members write and produce Snapshots, a monthly newsletter highlighting the work of the agency and its partners.