



Driftless Prairies: Native Ecosystems

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A Rose is a Rose

There are good roses and bad roses and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) is the worst!! Often noxious and invasive plants are determined as such from state to state but this one is a federally listed invasive! Its introduction is what I term "not well researched" and like most of our invasive plants began as nursery stock because of their hardy growth and low maintenance. Not only did individuals begin planting these to landscape their homes, farmers were encouraged to use it as "living fences" for their cattle, and transportation departments used it for erosion control.

It's a hardy perennial and large bushes can produce an abundance of seeds, depending on the size of the bush. The larger shrubs have been known to produce 1 million seeds; these seeds reportedly have a 10-20 year viability. When cut they can resprout from the rootstock or if the branches have arched sufficiently, the tip may become rooted as well. Studies have shown 2 other methods of regeneration: root suckering and root layering. Root suckering is when a root comes from the basal area of the plant and root layering is what propagators use to create a new bush by burying a portion of a stem and allowing it to generate roots. Either of these methods require the original plant to be alive. My research (via internet and personally) have found that these plants do not reproduce from laying cut stems on the ground.

Multiflora roses provide no habitat value and crowd out plants that would. Their thorns are recumbent, meaning they point downward, and therefore can cause problems for wildlife, especially birds.

Although an infestation can seem like the impossible to remove, it is not. The hardest part is just beginning. It may seem like an impossible task, but you have to begin to end!!

Most important is to not allow the bush to go to seed. Below are a few methods for removing these; my preference is #4 because I have yet to find a bush resprout when I treated them in this manner and I find it uses the least amount of herbicide.

1. Cut and treat with 20% concentration of Garlon 4 (the chemical is trichlopyr) – that would be 32oz of Garlon 4 per gallon of bark oil

Multiflora rose is very easy to identify and not mix up with other good roses. Once you've learned to ID these, you'll note their existence wherever you drive!

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