

Brush Busters — A Common Sense Approach for Brush Management

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To ignore brush on rangeland or improved pasture until it is dense and mature is a common error among landowners. Brush Busters' methods make it possible to control brush in the seedling, sapling, or regrowth stages while it is most vulnerable, before it causes debilitation of the desirable forage plants or accelerates soil erosion, and before brush produces seeds which may germinate and re-infest pastures for years. Brush Busters provides user-friendly, do-it-yourself technology that is highly selective and effective, environmentally friendly, and usually much less expensive than conventional mechanical or herbicide broadcast control methods. To date, the Brush Busters program has targeted mesquite, pricklypear, huisache, saltcedar, yucca, Chinese tallowtree, McCartney rose and juniper. Brush Busters' methods are easily understood, even by those with little or no previous experience in brush control, and recommends only *select* treatments capable of killing at least 7 out of 10 of the plants treated. Brush Busters' methods make every attempt to keep equipment costs and complexity to a minimum, and whenever possible, to use non-restricted herbicides. One-page pamphlets that describe, in a simple 3-step process, the Brush Busters' control methods for each targeted species are available from any Texas County Extension Service office. Videos on several Brush Busters species are available for checkout through most Texas County Extension Service offices that demonstrate the Brush Buster's control methods. Brush Busters' information is also available on the TexNat web site (<http://texnat.tamu.edu>). Brush Busters has achieved great success in Texas. For example, since its development in 1995, the acres of mesquite treated using Brush Busters methods increased from approximately 400,000 acres/yr to over 600,000 acres/yr in 1998 and 1999, an increase of over 50%. During 1998 and 1999, rangeland owners saved an estimated \$7 million annually by using Brush Busters' methods, and reduced the quantity of herbicide used by 18%, as compared to traditional aerial broadcast applications. In 2000, the Brush Busters program was recognized by Governor George W. Bush receiving the Texas Environmental Excellence Award.