



**This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/control-volunteer-trees-now>

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Volunteer trees need to be controlled now

K-State horticulture experts shares how to prevent and control volunteer trees

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — During December, many homeowners are focused on Christmas trees, but Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini said there are other trees to be thinking about.

“Though trees are a vital part of our landscapes, there are situations where volunteer trees need to be controlled,” Domenghini said.

Volunteer trees are saplings that grow from seeds by themselves. Often the issue is the wrong plant in the wrong place, such as home lawns.

“If the tree is still small and a desirable species, you may want to consider transplanting in the spring,” Domenghini said.

Active control measures can be taken if the tree is not desirable. Most trees resprout after cutting, but those that don’t, can be effectively controlled by cutting. Domenghini listed a few examples of common species that do resprout after being cut:

- Siberian Elm.
- Hackberry.
- Osage Orange.
- Oak.
- Ash.
- Aspen.
- Cottonwood.
- Maple.
- Sycamore.
- Willow.

Tree species that do resprout after cutting call for different control methods. “These trees will either need to be dug out or the cut stump treated with herbicide after cutting,” Domenghini said.

Domenghini said the recommendations she gives to control volunteer trees are only for those that come from seeds rather than suckers that originate from the roots of an existing tree.

“Using herbicides on suckers will damage and very possibly kill the original tree,” Domenghini said. “Trees that commonly produce suckers include tree of heaven, honey locust, black locust, western soapberry, cottonwood, aspen, poplar, willow and boxelder.”

According to Domenghini, the most commonly available herbicides are triclopyr and glyphosate. Roundup is a common name for an herbicide that contains glyphosate, while triclopyr is found in many brush killers.

“Read the label before purchasing to make sure that a stump treatment is listed,” Domenghini said. “Most often the undiluted or lightly diluted product is applied to the stump immediately after cutting.”

Regardless of the herbicide used, it is important to treat the stump immediately or within five minutes of cutting.

“Trees do not need to be actively growing to be controlled,” Domenghini said. “Actually this time of year is a very good time to treat as long as applications are made when the temperature is about freezing.”

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State’s Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a [weekly Horticulture Newsletter](#) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens.

Interested persons can subscribe to the newsletter, as well as send their garden and yard-related questions to hortsupport@ksu.edu, or contact your [local K-State Research and Extension office](#).

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story

K-State Horticulture Newsletter, <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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