

Invasive Vine Treatment

Jim Thornton—Conyers, Georgia

Ever heard of *Smilax rotundifolia*? It kind of rolls off the tip of your tongue, doesn't it? Does it sound like a nice plant?

Folks, it is anything but. It is, AKA, a round leaf greenbrier or "horse briar." Get the picture?

I've seen it wind itself everywhere; Twenty, thirty feet into trees and sometimes, completely covering shrubs. It is a thorny, wiry vine with a deep-rooted knotty nodule-type root. Believe me, it is hard to get rid of!

I have tried pulling, digging, cutting, dabbing, painting, swearing and a little voodoo, but to no avail. And, when it grows up in the middle of a shrub, well forget it. Until now!

This will be the third year I will have used this method and I hope to see continued successful results. It is also time to share this information with ASA members.

First, you need some "Floral Water Picks." I call them vials or capsules, but they are a florist thing. They use them to stick cut flowers in a small amount of stored water and arrange them in styrofoam, wreaths or whatever.

I purchased some from a hobby store at a cost of one dollar for a 12 pack. If you don't have a place like this, try your local florist. I am sure they will part with a few.

A hint: the picks are green plastic and can easily get lost. I spray paint mine with a bright red paint to make them easy to see.

A basket is handy for preparing the vials and for carrying them around.

Next you will need some herbicide. I have used Round-Up® in the past, but now I prefer Spectracide® Brush Killer. I am sure others will work as well. Fill the pick with undiluted herbicide. The pick holds 9 ml, but use about 5 or 6 ml. I use an old syringe from a printer ink cartridge fill kit to fill the pick. A meat or poultry injector will also do.

Okay, you are now ready to go forth and do battle. Simply

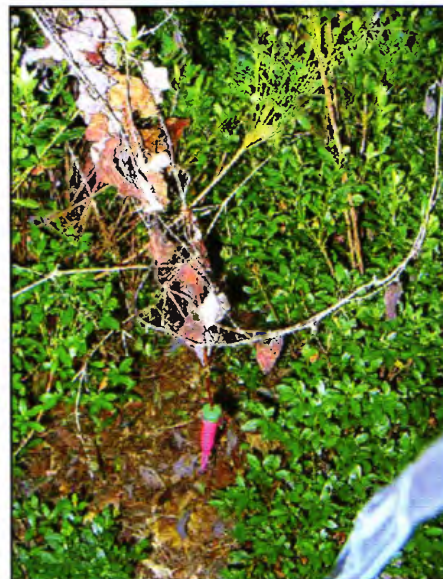
select a vine with length enough to handle outside of the shrub. Better yet, long enough to bend to the ground so you can anchor the pick. Make sure the vine has a wide girth, about the size of a "match stick" to make a tight fit in the rubber vial cap. Strip away leaves, thorns, etc. Insert the cut end of the vine into the rubber cap, down into the herbicide, making sure the vine is bent downward.

Next step: walk away! In a couple of days you will notice the results. That is it! Later you can come back, remove the pick and move on to the next war zone.

I have tried this on other vines such as honeysuckle, blackberry, kudzu, and Virginia creeper with the same great results. Wild grapes are another matter, however. It seems that they exude so much sap that it forces the herbicide out of the vial. Maybe my timing is off.

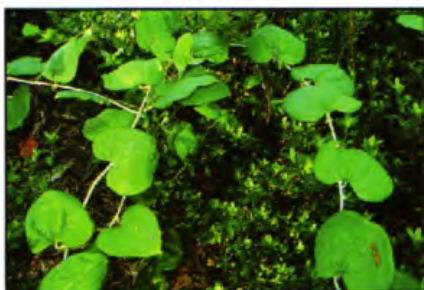
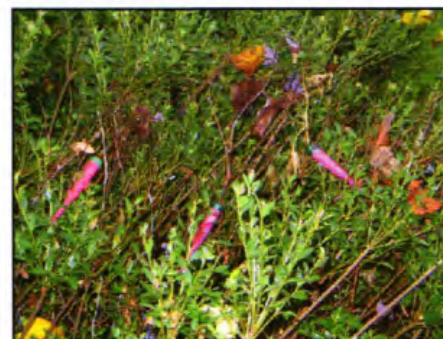
Speaking of timing, I start treatment in late spring through late fall. And, one last piece of advice; When working with any chemical read the label.

Any questions or comments, contact me at jimpatsy@worldnet.att.net



▲ Anchor the pick to the ground.

▼ Within a couple of days, the vines begin to die.



▲ *Smilax rotundifolia*

▼ Helpful hint: To easily identify the picks, spray paint them a bright color.



Jim Thornton is an occasional contributor to The Azalean. He is a co-founder and the first president of the Oconee Chapter. He has served as a director, vice president, and president of the Azalea Society of America. Jim presently is the membership and public relations chair of the Oconee Chapter.