

This hand seeding gives these desired plants an early advantage, stabilizes soils in the right-of-way and allows them to out-compete the taller growing trees. The SaskPower Shand Greenhouse plays an important role in this aspect of our integrated vegetation management efforts, by supplying many of the native shrub seedlings we use.

Selective herbicide application

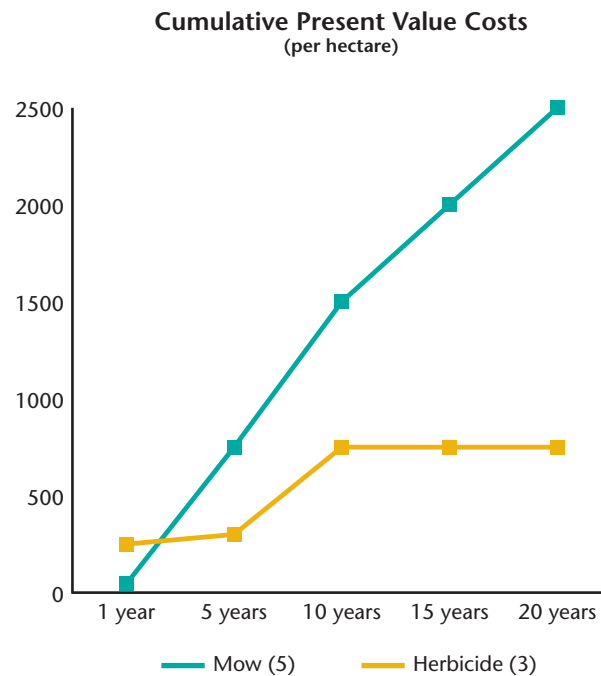
The selective use of herbicides on transmission and distribution line rights-of-way encourages low, dense plant cover that discourages the invasion of tree seedlings. Herbicide is generally used one or two growing seasons after brush mowing, to address the re-sprouting that inevitably occurs.

Once low-growing vegetation is established on the right-of-way, only problem trees are selected for treatment. The end result is an increase in the number of desirable species, such as shrubs, wildflowers and berry-producing plants, which are important for wildlife habitat and do not pose a threat to power lines.

All herbicides used by SaskPower are regulated through the federal government's *Pest Control Products Act*. All applications of herbicides are conducted by certified commercial contractors or by SaskPower personnel who hold a Pesticide Applicator License, issued under the authority of the *Pest Control Products (Saskatchewan) Act*. SaskPower does not use herbicides within 30 metres of waterbodies.

Vegetation management cost comparisons

By managing vegetation on rights-of-way using a combination of mechanical, native vegetation and selective herbicide options, SaskPower is being both fiscally and environmentally responsible. Cost projections based on the results of similar programs demonstrate that introducing herbicides to vegetation management programs can produce long-term cost savings. The graph shows that this integrated approach can result in significant cost reductions as early as five years into the program.



The above graph illustrates the effects of the mechanical treatments on cumulative per right-of-way hectare costs of maintenance versus the effects of herbicide applications.

SaskPower's integrated vegetation management policy balances our commitment to protect the environment, with our mandate to provide customers with safe, reliable and cost-effective sources of electricity.



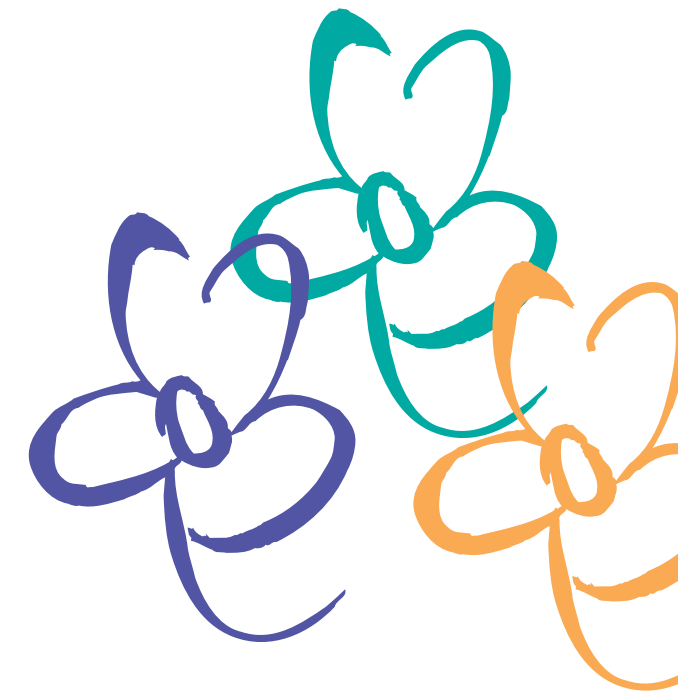
The Western Red Lily can be found on rights-of-way in Saskatchewan.

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integrated

vegetation management



At SaskPower, integrated vegetation management is one of several long-term programs designed to meet our corporate commitment to protect the environment, while providing our customers with safe, reliable and cost-effective sources of electricity.

What is integrated vegetation management?

Integrated vegetation management uses an understanding of plant ecology to manage vegetation in a variety of effective, economical and environmentally responsible ways.



Seedlings are grown at the SaskPower Shand Greenhouse.



Maintaining vegetation around power lines helps to ensure their safe operation.

SaskPower is committed to an integrated vegetation management strategy that:

- incorporates ecological principles;
- considers community values in establishing standards of maintenance;
- receives land-owner consent;
- is cost-effective;
- uses herbicides responsibly; and
- complies with SaskPower's environment policy, as well as all relevant federal and provincial legislation and municipal bylaws.

Our integrated vegetation management policy outlines a variety of options for removing plant species along transmission and distribution line rights-of-way, while also encouraging the establishment of plant species that provide important wildlife habitat. These options include:

- mechanical methods;
- seeded and naturally occurring native vegetation; and
- selective herbicide use.

Why is it needed?

Across the province, SaskPower manages over 150,000 kilometres of transmission and distribution lines. To ensure the safe operation of these lines, SaskPower maintains vegetation along all power line rights-of-way, which can vary in width from 10 to 70 meters depending on the height of the surrounding vegetation. By using integrated vegetation management practices to promote the development of low-growing vegetation, we reduce the possibility of branches or limbs falling across a line during a storm, which can cause damage and interrupt electrical service. In forested areas, if trees come in contact with high voltage lines, they could cause forest fires.

Benefits for wildlife

Maintaining transmission and distribution line rights-of-way is not only important to ensure the safe delivery of electrical service to our customers, it also provides habitat for many types of wildlife. The low-growing plants and shrubs that grow in rights-of-way, as a result of our integrated vegetation management practices, provide important sources of food and cover to many animals.

Mechanical methods

When appropriate, SaskPower uses mechanical methods for vegetation management; including brush mowing, mulching, tree-trimming and slashing. Special equipment is capable of mowing saplings up to six inches (15 cm) in

diameter. Problem trees may be hand-cut on an individual basis. Slashing (hand-cutting using chainsaws or bush-saws) is performed near significant waterbodies and on erosion-sensitive slopes. By tailoring the vegetation management program to the specific site, SaskPower ensures that vegetation removal does not cause land degradation.

Suitable to many types of terrain, mechanical methods deliver immediate control of all vegetation. These methods, however, provide only short-term vegetation control (five to eight years). Over the long term, sprouting from undisturbed roots will occur unless the mowed area is also treated with herbicides.



The Saskatoon is an example of low-growing vegetation compatible with rights-of-way.

Native vegetation

Growth of desirable plants such as grasses, herbs, wildflowers, shrubs and low-growing trees may occur naturally following mechanical removal of vegetation. However, in some cases, seeds of low-growing native vegetation are planted along a transmission or distribution line right-of-way.