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BC RESEARCHER PUTS BROADSTAR TO THE TEST

Consultant Mario Lanthier took part in a three-year study on nursery herbicide BroadStar. The study, conducted through CropHealth Advising & Research – a private research company based in British Columbia – set out to determine what weeds the product works on, how well it works and if the plants can tolerate an application.

"At the time we started the research, we had three weeds not being controlled by herbicides already on the market – snapweed/bittercrest, groundsel and liverwort," says Lanthier. "We still have these weeds but using BroadStar in containers has reduced them into almost nothing."

Trials were conducted in southern Alberta and interior and coastal regions of British Columbia.

"We did a number of trials and set up with some plants not treated, and some plants treated with different rates of the herbicide – including two and four times the label rate to mimic incorrect field applications to see if that would trigger problems," says Lanthier.

Lanthier and his team tested BroadStar on more than 30 plants, giving them a good perspective on how the product works, and observe any issues with plant injury or tolerance to the herbicide.

"What we found with our BroadStar research is that it is safest to use it on late dormant plants coming out of the winter with no foliage," he says. If BroadStar touches green foliage it causes a burn spot.

While nursery growers often want to use a herbicide pre-emergent at the end of the summer for winter annual leaves on plants that germinate in late August early September, there is a risk of burning on the leaves.
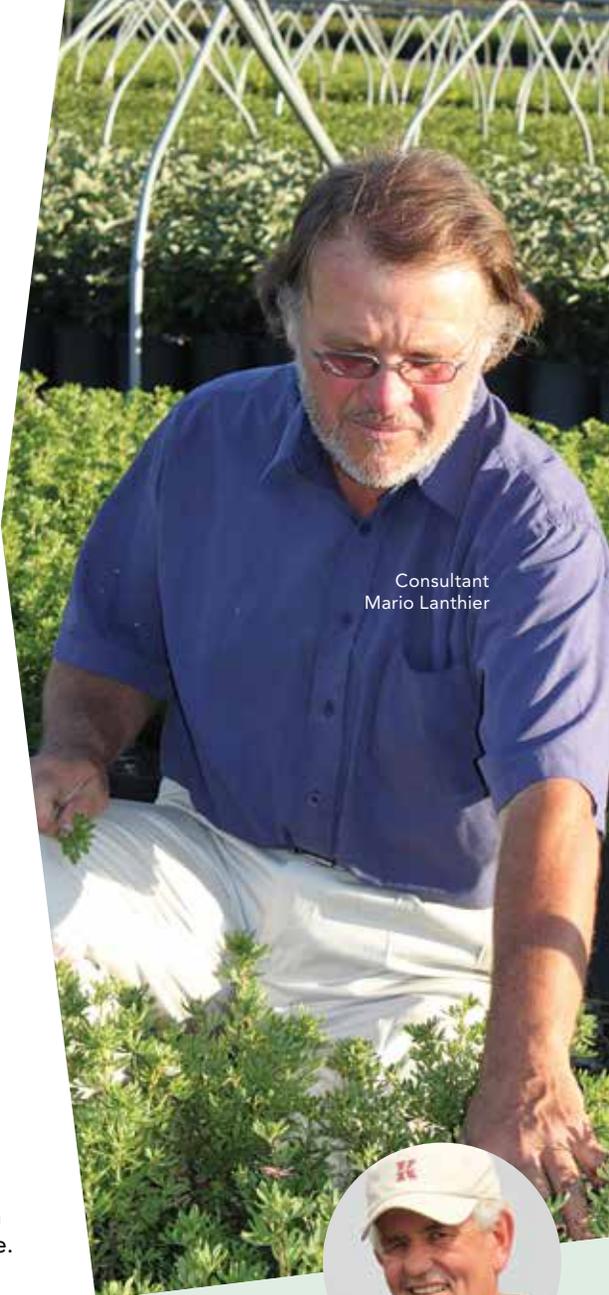
"BroadStar is designed to kill plant foliage. So when applying a second application of BroadStar for the winter annuals, it's important to use irrigation immediately following application to wash the product out of the plant foliage. This moves the product down on to the container surface where we want it for herbicide application," he explains.

Lanthier and his team tested BroadStar on more than 30 plants in BC and Alberta.

The researchers also studied the issue of using BroadStar on dormant plants, and whether this posed any later problems for plants. "We use BroadStar on dormant plants coming out of the winter when the buds are still closed. And we wondered what happens down the road," says Lanthier.

A liquid application of BroadStar was applied on top of dormant plants, and from what Lanthier saw, when the leaves later emerged there was no damage or concern. "Except if the buds were swelling and cracking open when the herbicide was applied, the very first leaves to emerge showed damage from the herbicide, but growth subsequent had absolutely no problems whatsoever. We saw no problems with BroadStar translocating inside the plant. There was some damage at application but nothing the next week."

Lanthier also cautions to read the label for plant tolerance and conduct a small test for plants not currently listed. "This is a great herbicide, very safe on most ornamental plants" he says. "However, in our trials, spirea and hydrangea showed severe damage when treated with BroadStar, even when the plants were dormant at the time of application. There is a caution on the label about it."

Consultant
Mario Lanthier

"Using BroadStar and SureGuard has been cost effective for our nursery because we don't need a lot of people to weed, and it cuts down on the cost per plant we produce. We use BroadStar on most varieties in our nursery and experience three to four months of control. In the spring, as soon as the established plants are spaced out we apply BroadStar. Our potting takes place from April to June, and shortly after the plants are put down in position we apply BroadStar again. When we put the plants away for the winter in the poly-house, we apply BroadStar one more time."

– Tony Vandenberg, Mori Nurseries Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON