

LEAFY SPURGE

Euphorbia esula
Euphorbiaceae, the spurge family
Category: Containment

Utah State University, Bugwood.org

FACTSHEET INFORMATION

Summary of Invasiveness

- Leafy Spurge contains a viscous latex that can cause skin irritation and even blindness. It is toxic to cattle and horses and reduces grazing quality for sheep and goats.
- The plant decreases biodiversity by overtaking large areas of land, displacing native species.
- It produces a large quantity of seeds that can remain viable for up to 8 years.

Description

- Perennial that grows as clusters with upright stems reaching 2.5 feet tall.
- Develops deep tap roots and lateral roots with adventitious buds, capable of producing new shoots.
- A pair of showy, yellowish-green, heart-shaped bracts enclose small flower clusters.
- Stems exude a toxic, milky sap if broken.
- 3-lobed seed capsules explode at maturity, dispersing seeds up to 15 feet.

Introduction and Movement

- Leafy spurge is native to Eurasia and was likely introduced to the U.S. as a seed contaminant.
- Inhabits rangeland, pastures, roadsides, and riparian areas.
- The plant expels seeds up to 15' aiding with seed dispersal. Seeds are also dispersed via wind, water, and human and animal vectors.

Prevention Strategy

- To prevent accidental introductions, learn how to identify Leafy spurge and eradicate infestations on your property.
- Always remove and properly dispose of all seed and plant materials on vehicles, clothing, shoes and pets before you exit or enter outdoor recreational sites.
- Use care when removing plant materials as parts of the plant are toxic. Contact your county weed superintendent for eradication options.
- Always Remember To: **KNOCK IT OFF!**

Sources

- CABI Invasive Species Compendium: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/21347>
- Idaho's Noxious Weeds 9th Edition, University of Idaho: <http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/publishing/pdf/BUL/BUL816.pdf>.



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LEAFY SPURGE DISTRIBUTION MAP

