



Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia escula*)



Photo courtesy ARS Team Leafy Spurge

Leafy Spurge	
General	<p>Family: Euphorbiaceae Native Range: Europe and Asia Deep rooted, long lived perennial Extremely difficult to control Has plant toxins that may displace other plants</p>
Habitat	<p>Found in disturbed sites, meadows, pastures, abandoned fields, roadside areas. Prefers dry locations but can tolerate moisture. Will grow in many soil types. Displaces native vegetation. Found in hot and cold climates. Elevation: 5000-6000 ft</p>
PLANT	
Vegetation	<p>Mature plants are 1.5-3.5 ft tall Contains a milky latex sap Grows in dense patches Stems are light green, hairless, turn reddish in the fall Shoots develop from numerous stem and root buds and from seed Leaves are ¼ - ½ inch wide and 1-4 inches long</p>
Roots	<p>Vertical and horizontal. Vertical roots -to depths of 26 feet. Horizontal roots - may grow 15 feet a year. Withstand periods of drought, grazing, and herbicides. Contain large food reserves. Plants will regrow after grazing or mechanical treatments.</p>



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Flower	<p>Color: Yellowish-green Enclosed in two heart shaped bracts. Dried seed pods explode and expel seeds up to 15 feet. April to May but may continue until fall. Seeds are dispersed 4-6 weeks after flowering. Flowers produce seed 45-55 days after bolting.</p>		
Seed	<p>Can remain viable for 8 years or more Each stalk can produce 140-250 seeds</p>		
Seedling	<p>Germinate in early spring - Peak germination is in May Produces vegetative buds 10 to 12 days after germination Can produce roots 3 feet deep and spread 40 inches laterally in 4 months Rarely flowers the first year</p>		
Reproduction	<p>Seed and vegetative. Can reproduce from root fragments 1/2 inch long</p>		
CONTROL			
BIOLOGICAL	<p>Works best as part of a IPM plan (May-Aug) <i>Aphthona sp.</i> - flea beetles <i>Hyles euphorbiae</i> - Leafy spurge hawkmoth <i>Oberea erythrocephala</i> - Red-headed leafy spurge stem borer <i>Spurgia esulae</i> - Leafy spurge tip gall midge</p>		
CHEMICAL	When actively growing	<p>Plateau Dicamba (Banvel, Veteran) Tordon* (Restricted Use) Glyphosate - Spot treatment only (RoundUp, Rodeo)</p>	Spring or Fall
CULTURAL	<p>Prevention Intensive tilling. Promotion of healthy grass. Reseeding. Removal - Not effective unless within the first year of growth and prior to seed formation.</p>		
MECHANICAL			
Burning	<p>Ineffective if used alone. May provide uniform regrowth for more effective herbicide treatment. May allow grasses to germinate and provide competition.</p>		
Grazing	<p>Goats and sheep - Short term intensive grazing is most successful. Must be repeated as plants regrow. Cattle will not graze. Causes lesions around the eyes and mouth. Is a digestive tract irritant.</p>		
Mowing	<p>Ineffective if used alone. May provide regrowth for more effective herbicide treatment. May allow grasses to germinate and provide competition.</p>		
Other Info	<p>www.ext.colostate.edu/PUBS/NATRES/03107.pdf www.team.ars.usda.gov/</p>		
<p>Use all chemicals according to the manufacturer's label. No specific recommendation or endorsement is made or implied by listing the above methods or products.</p>			