

WEEDS TO WATCH

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LEAFY SPURGE

Watch out for **Leafy Spurge** (*Euphorbia esula* L.).

It is a deep and widely spread rooted, long-lived perennial native to Eurasia. It may have been introduced to North America in the 19th Century as an ornamental or contaminant in imported grain or ballast water. Spurge is widespread throughout the United States and southern Canada. Since its introduction, spurge has become a serious management problem, particularly for the north and central plains states.

Leafy Spurge can displace entire native plant communities. These ecologic changes directly affect local and regional economies through reduced recreational and agricultural revenue. Due to its extensive root system, herbicide management of established stands is costly and requires repeated periodic application. Leafy spurge is a serious problem in cropland, where herbicide rates required often exceed recommended amounts. It is a Noxious Weed in South Dakota and must be con-

trolled by landowners and public agencies alike.

HABITAT: Grows in a variety of dry and moist habitats frequently infesting rough terrain and commonly found in vacant lands.

REPRODUCTION: Begins growing in early spring when weather hovers around 32 degrees. Grows from buds on roots as well as from seedlings. One of the first plants to emerge. Peek seed production occurs in late May to early June or when moist soils exist. May go dormant during hot summer periods but will resume growth in the falls. When the flowering stem matures, each exploding capsule projects seeds up to 15 feet; however, rhizome spread offers even more power to proliferate. Seed spread occurs via all modes including floating along streambanks and can occur all summer with moist conditions.

CONTROL METHODS: Prevention is most effective by avoiding importation, purchasing certified weed-free products, and properly managing desirable plant communities.

Eradication should be implemented immediately upon detection. Herbicide treatment should be checked frequently and spot-sprayed as needed.

Picloram (*Tordon 22k*) has been proven to be the leading herbicide in controlling Leafy Spurge. Apply annually during flowering or approximately 2 weeks after yellow bracts at one pint per acre combined with 2,4D at one quart per acre. Four annual applications will reduce population by 85%. Some have gone as high as one quart per acre for the first year.

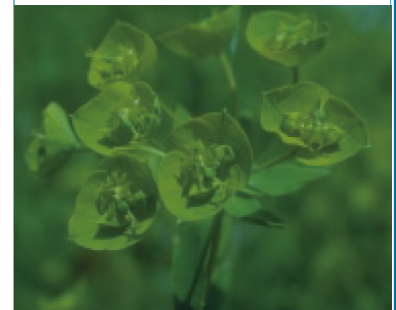
Another option is fall-applied imazapic. If glyphosate is an option, a single treatment of one pint per acre plus same of 2,4D.

As always, follow manufacturer's instructions and see labels for restrictions for spraying near livestock, waterways, and other information.

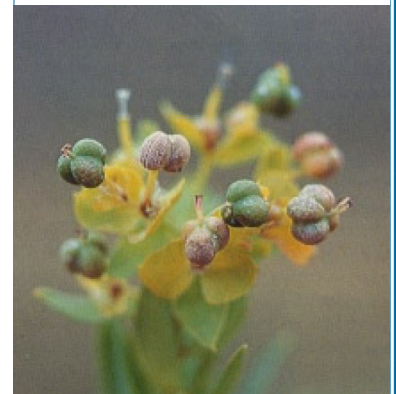
This information was assembled from the following articles: "Leafy Spurge: Biology, Ecology and Management" by Goodwin, Sheley, Nowierski, and Lym.



Easily can take over a hillside if left unchecked.



Flowers are surrounded by dramatic yellow-green bracts.



Loped capsules explode when dry projecting seeds up to 15'.

INVASIVE & NOXIOUS WEEDS

Invasive weeds are non-native plants that invade ecosystems and replace native plants.

Noxious weeds are usually invasive and designated by State law as priority plants that require control by landowners. These weeds can reduce grazing land and impact wildlife habitat.

Early detection and quick response is critical to slow

spread and protect weed-free areas.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide early control methods and recommended treatments.

Contact your county Extension agent for management of large infestations or call

Ralph Hammer, Minnehaha County Weed and Pest Supervisor, at 605-367-4316.

