

# Leafy Spurge Fact Sheet

*Euphorbia esula*

*Euphorbiaceae* Family



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## Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** Yellowish green flowers surrounded by bracts.
- ❷ **Seeds:** Each flowering stem produces 140 seeds; Seed capsules throw their seeds up to 15 ft.
- ❸ **Leaves:** 1-4 inches long and narrow.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** May through July.

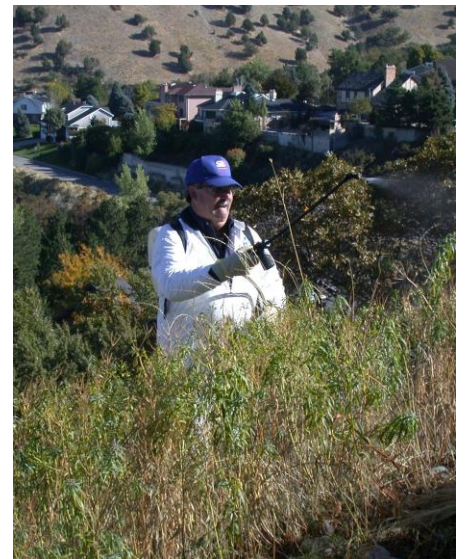
**Caution!! All parts of leafy spurge contain a caustic latex sap that can result in skin irritation, redness, swelling, and blisters. Leafy spurge is toxic to horses, cattle, and humans.**

## Impacts:

- Leafy spurge is highly competitive with native plants, often replacing native plant communities and decreasing plant diversity and reducing wildlife forage and habitat.
- Leafy spurge is difficult to control once established because of the extensive root system. The above portion of the plant may stand up to 3 feet tall, but the root system can grow over 26 feet down and 15 feet across.
- The roots provide storage for a large nutrient reserve and can move herbicides out of the plant and into the soil.

## Control:

- Early control in May/June is critical to long-term management, as is establishing competitive grass cover.
- Research from North Dakota State University indicates that Tordon 22K (picloram) 2,4-D, Banvel/Vanquish/Clarity (dicamba) are most effective when applied in spring, followed by a fall application to leafy spurge re-growth if needed.
- The key to control leafy spurge is to exhaust the root nutrient stores, causing it to collapse. Control methods must be maintained consistently for 4-5 years, or infestations can quickly rebound.
- Mowing and cultivation are not recommended.



SLCo Weed Supervisor sprays leafy spurge near Big Cottonwood Canyon.

*\*Please visit our website for references sourcing this information.*



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