

Stop

The Invasion



Photograph courtesy of Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org

Leafy Spurge

Euphorbia esula

Report Sightings

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invasivespecies.wa.gov

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Photograph courtesy of William M. Ciesla, Forest Health Management International, Bugwood.org

What is it?

Leafy spurge is an erect plant that grows 1.5-3 feet tall, with yellow flowers. It can survive in a wide variety of conditions, but spreads most successfully in areas that have been grazed. Leafy spurge can dramatically reduce the livestock carrying capacity on pasture and rangelands. Multiple strains of leafy spurge most likely were imported to the United States at different times from Europe and Asia.

Is it here yet?

Yes. Leafy spurge has been documented in 16 counties, mostly in eastern Washington and, to a lesser extent, around Puget Sound.

Why should I care?

Leafy spurge is poisonous to some animals and unpalatable to most, and can cause blisters on humans. Low levels of infestation will discourage cows from grazing in a pasture. Leafy spurge also infests croplands, withstands cultivation, and can impact recreation areas.

What should I do if I find one?

Do not purchase, plant, or trade this species. Contact your county noxious weed coordinator at http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/nwcb_county.htm. Report online at www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/report.shtml.

How can we stop it?

Use certified weed-free seed and feed; clean vehicles, animals, and equipment that have traveled through infested or potentially infested areas; and learn to identify this plant to be able to eradicate it when infestations are small. Leafy spurge is on Washington's Terrestrial Noxious Weed Seed and Plant Quarantine list, meaning it is prohibited to transport, buy, sell, offer for sale, or distribute leafy spurge plants, plant parts, or seeds (Washington Administrative Code 16-752-610). Leafy spurge also is listed as a Class B noxious weed in Washington, meaning it is designated for control in certain state regions (See <http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/searchResults.asp?class=B>).



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What are its characteristics?

- Plants begin growing in early spring.
- The stems, roots, and leaves exude a milky sap.
- Stems are 1.5-3 feet tall.
- Smooth-edged yellow-green leaves. Leaves turn red in the fall and reach 3 inches in length.
- Heart-shaped clusters of yellow flowers.

How do I distinguish it from native species?

Leafy spurge can be distinguished by the milky latex found in all parts of the plant. It can be confused with other species. If you need help with plant identification, please Contact your county noxious weed coordinator at http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/nwcb_county.htm.

Where do I get more information?

- Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture:
<http://biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/imagecollection.php?Genus=Euphorbia&Species=esula>
- King County: <http://kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/leafy-spurge.aspx>
- National Invasive Species Information Center:
<http://invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/leafyspurge.shtml>
- Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board:
<http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/detail.asp?weed=50>

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