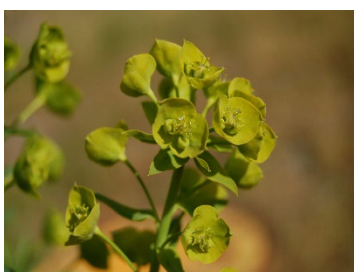




Photo: Matt Lavin, Flickr



Leafy Spurge



Yellow leafy spurge flowers. Photo: Tony Frates, Flickr

What Is It?

Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) is an upright plant that grows up to three feet and has yellow flowers. It can survive in a wide variety of conditions, but spreads most successfully in areas that have been grazed. Leafy spurge can reduce pasture and rangeland quality dramatically. It is estimated that leafy spurge causes a \$35 million to \$45 million loss each year in U.S. beef and hay production. Most likely, multiple types of leafy spurge were imported to the United States at different times from Europe and Asia.

Is It Here Yet?

Yes. Leafy spurge has been documented in sixteen 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 most will not even eat it. Low levels of leafy spurge will discourage cows from grazing in a pasture. Additionally, it can cause blisters on humans. Leafy spurge also infests croplands, withstands cultivation, and may impact recreation areas.

What Are Its Characteristics?

- Plants begin growing in early spring.
- The stems, roots, and leaves have a milky sap.
- Stems are 1½-3 feet tall and branch at the top.
- Narrow, smooth-edged, yellow-green leaves. Leaves turn red in the fall and reach 3 inches in length.
- Leaves beneath the flowers are heart-shaped.



Leafy spurge flowers are small with yellow petal-like structures. Photo: USDA NRCS Montana, Flickr



Leafy Spurge

- Small, greenish flowers are clustered at the top of the plant. Yellow petal-like structures (called sepals) are found at the base of the flowers.

How Do I Distinguish It From Native Species?

Leafy spurge may be distinguished by the milky latex found in all plant parts.

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. Learn to identify this plant and eradicate infestations immediately. Leafy spurge is on Washington's 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.

What Should I Do If I Find It?

Report immediately via the WA Invasives mobile app or reporting web form at <https://invasivespecies.wa.gov/report-a-sighting/>.



Leafy spurge flowers and leaves.
Photo: Keith Ewing, Flickr