

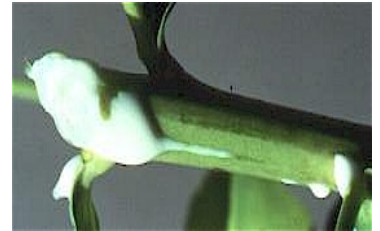
# Leafy Spurge

*Euphorbia esula*

**Description:** Leafy spurge is a long-lived deep-rooted perennial that reproduces from an extensive root system and seeds. The plant has erect stems, which originate from a crown just below the soil surface. Leafy spurge begins growing in early spring before other vegetation, appearing in patches. Foliage is yellow-green from mid-summer to fall when the plant turns red with the first frost. Leaves, stems and roots all exude a milky, irritating sap when broken. Flowers appear as showy yellow bracts toward the tips of the branches, but the actual flowers are small and green without petals. Seeds can be disbursed 20 or more feet when the capsule ripens and explodes. The root system contains numerous stem buds, most occurring within the first foot of the soil, but roots can extend to a depth of 15 feet, reproducing if broken by tillage or soil disturbance.



**Impacts:** Livestock grazing can be reduced from 50 to 75 percent in areas with heavy infestations. Once spurge occupies 20 percent of an area, livestock will avoid the entire area for grazing. Leafy spurge competes so well in Washington that it often forms dense stands nearly excluding all other non-woody vegetation. The plant contains an alkaloid that, in addition to being toxic to animals, seriously irritates the skin of many people, and can cause blindness upon eye contact.



## Control Options:

### ► Manual Techniques

Manual control is possible for small infestations. Care should be taken to avoid contact with the milky white sap, which irritates the skin and can cause blindness.

### ► Chemical Techniques

Products containing the active ingredient **Fosamine (KRENITE™)** are considered “moderate in hazard” and are a choice for chemical control.

**NON-CROPLAND APPLICATIONS ONLY.** Should treated areas be converted to cropland, do not plant to food crops nor graze livestock within 1 year of treatment. Do not apply directly to water or wetlands, or to areas where surface water is present, or to areas where the herbicide is likely to move into water. Follow all label precautions and safety measures.

**WARNING: CAUSES EYE IRRITATION.** Do not get in eyes, on skin, or on clothing. Always use personal protective equipment that includes adequate eye protection.

- Spot application means the herbicide is applied only to the plants and not on the surrounding plants or soil. Spray each plant thoroughly on the stems and leaves enough to be wet but not dripping.
- Control should take place when plants are actively growing and before seeds are produced.

**READ AND FOLLOW ALL LABEL DIRECTIONS AND RESTRICTIONS.** Obey all label precautions and safety measures. Always use personal protective equipment that includes coveralls, waterproof gloves, shoes plus socks, and protective eyewear. Use of brand names does not connote endorsement and is for reference only; other formulations of the same herbicides may be available under other names. Information provided is current as of the date of the fact sheet. Pesticide product registration is renewed annually and product names and formulations may vary from year to year.



Thurston County Noxious Weed Program

9605 Tilley Road S  
Olympia WA 98512  
Phone: 360-786-5576