

Invasive Species Fact Sheet-Leafy Spurge

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Species Common Name: Leafy Spurge

Species Scientific Name: *Euphorbia esula*

Native Range and Introduction: Leafy Spurge is native to Europe, and was introduced accidentally into North America in the early 1800s in contaminated seed. It has been spread throughout the United States by the same vector, but is further distributed locally by wildlife and water.

Description: Perennial growing up to three feet tall, which reproduces from seeds and creeping roots. The entire plant contains a milky latex substance. Leaves are alternate, long, and narrow. Flowering heads are yellowish, green that appear more like heart shaped leaves than actual flowers. The root system is vast in size as mature roots will be brown and new growth buds will be pink.

Ecological and Economical Threats: Ecologically it can take over vast areas of land forming a monoculture and restricting the growth of any other vegetation, has caused direct loss of endangered plant species such as the western prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*). Also, habitat with dense stands lose much of the native ungulates use. Economically losses can be attributed to loss of grazing units (AUMs) and/or the drop of value by infested lands. In the states of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming alone leafy spurge infestations are estimated to result in an annual economic loss of US\$ 130-144 million.

Regulated Status in Wyoming: Leafy Spurge is on the Wyoming State Designated Noxious Weed List. The species is also on the North American Invasive Species Management Association Weed Free Forage Noxious Species List which Wyoming uses for its weed free forage standards.

Distribution in Wyoming: Found in all counties in Wyoming.

Control Options:

Mechanical: Can help stop/slow seed production, but is not viable for stand reduction.

Chemical: The two chemicals that have shown the greatest results are Tordon 22K (Picloram) and Plateau (Imazapic). Other less studied options include Quinstar (Quinclorac), Milestone (Aminopyralid), and Banvel (Dicamba).

Biological: Can be grazed by sheep or goats, will work slightly better than mechanical treatment, but not a real solution into stand reduction. Also two flea beetle species, the Black Dot and Brown Legged Spurge Flea Beetles have been released in many areas with varying results.

Integrated Weed Management: This could include treating hard to access pockets with high amounts of a flea beetle species, while treating other infestations with an early season Tordon 22K treatment and a fall treatment of Plateau.

Online Resources:

URL: <http://www.invasiveplantatlas.org/subject.html?sub=3405>

URL: <http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/21347>

Image 1 URL: <http://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=5473513>

Image 2 URL: <http://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=0024042>

Image 3 URL: <http://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=1459609>



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Image 1-Mature Plant Flowering



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Image 2-Milky latex inside plant

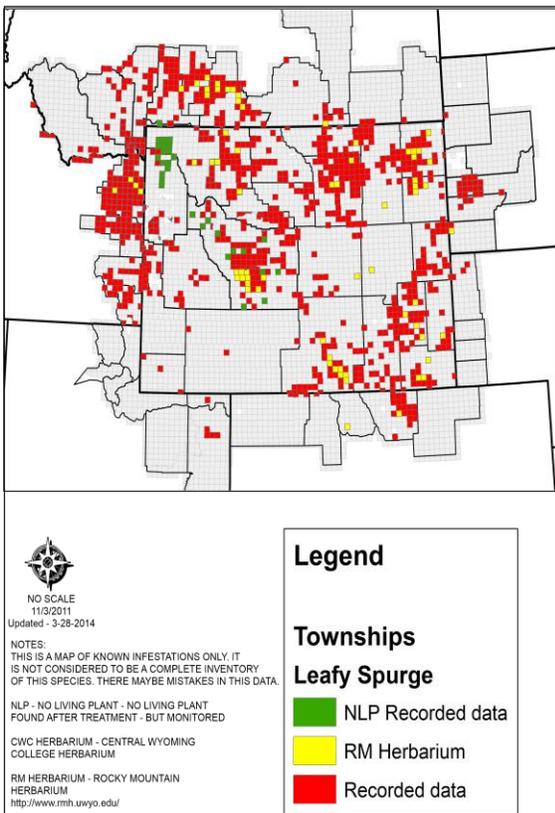
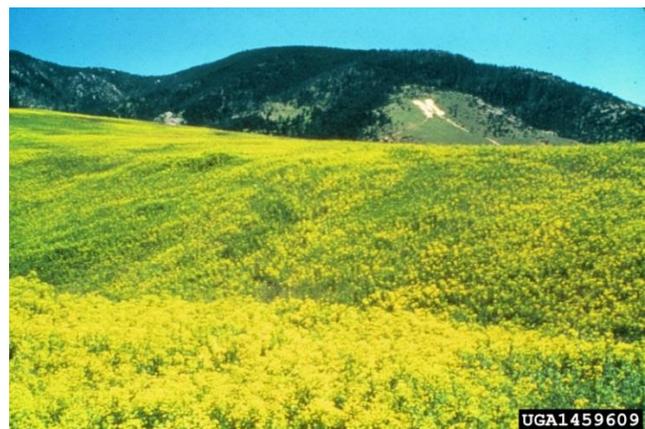


Figure 1-Distribution in Wyoming and Surrounding States

URL: http://wyoweed.org/images/Weed_Maps/Leafy_spurge.pdf



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Image 3-Leafy Spurge Infestation