

Leafy Spurge

- **Stems:** Erect, with numerous weak sterile branches. Main stem up to 3 ft tall and smooth. Exudes a milky juice when bruised. Leaves: Alternate, sessile, 1-4 inches long, narrow strap-shaped, bluish-green. Leaves of the flowering branches paired, broad, closely clasping the stems.
- **Flowers:** Yellowish, minute, borne on forking leafy branches. Flowering period is from May to July.
- **Fruits:** 3-lobed and 3-celled, each cell bearing a single seed.
- **Seeds:** Oblong, grayish to brown or purple.



Leafy spurge is a perennial that forms large colonies. Branches and paired leaves become yellow at maturity, entire plant turns orange or red in the fall. It is usually found along stream banks, on unplanted sites or in pasture and rangeland. It propagates both by rootstock and by seed. The plant contains a latex that causes severe irritation of the mouth and digestive system of cattle and horses.

Control is very important owing to the toxicity of the plant. Integrated management is most effective. Once established, it is very difficult to control.

Biological: Goats and sheep are not damaged by grazing the plant, and can perform limited bio-control. Some flea-beetles are also capable of controlling infestations. Chemical: Fall or early spring herbicide application is recommended. Older plants translocate herbicide poorly, so control by herbicide can be difficult. Most effective control occurs during the first 3-5 years of infestation.

Source: USDA Forest Service