

Know Your Nebraska Noxious Weeds

LEAFY SPURGE *Euphorbia esula* L.

Over generations both the rate of introduction and spread of noxious weeds have increased significantly. This change is mainly due to an increase in human travel, expanding commerce through trade, and a lack of knowledge of how weeds are spread. By becoming educated about noxious weeds, you're doing your part to help stop their spread and protect the environment.

What is the threat?

If noxious weeds are left uncontrolled, the Nebraska that we enjoy today will look much different for future generations. Do your part, become educated and help stop the spread of noxious weeds.

How did leafy spurge get here?

[Leafy spurge](#) is native to Eurasia. The first documented occurrence in North America was in Newbury, Massachusetts in 1827. Leafy spurge was declared a noxious weed in Nebraska in 1962.

What does leafy spurge look like?

[Leafy spurge](#) is a nonnative invasive weed with bright yellow heart-shaped bracts.

A unique characteristic of leafy spurge is the presence of a milky white latex that readily oozes from cut stems, leaves, or roots. Click on this short [video](#) to learn how to identify leafy spurge.

What is the impact of doing nothing?

Leafy spurge has a white milky juice or latex that contains compounds that are poisonous to cattle and horses, but not sheep and goats. It can reduce pasture and rangeland carrying capacity by as much as 75 percent because it competes with forages and cattle avoid grazing areas infested with this weed. Because of its aggressive nature, not only is your property at risk but leafy spurge will spread to neighboring properties as well.

Is leafy spurge good for anything?

Leafy spurge is eaten by sheep and goats following an acclimation period with little or no harm.

How does leafy spurge spread?

Leafy spurge aggressively and quickly spreads in several different ways and is difficult to control. As the seed capsules dry and split, seed can be thrown up to 15 feet. Seeds will float in water and germinate while floating. This increases the spread in sub-irrigated meadows and riparian areas. Leafy spurge is a deep-rooted perennial plant which allows it to spread by roots and vegetative buds. Animals and humans often play a role in seed dispersal.

How can I control leafy spurge?

Managing small infestations is more effective and less expensive.

Options for [leafy spurge control](#) include:

Herbicide - Many herbicides are effective in managing leafy spurge.

Biological – The flea beetle (*Aphthona lacertosa*) introduced from its native environment in Eurasia may provide some assistance. Biological agents are considered a tool and should not be relied on to eradicate an infestation.



What is a Noxious Weed?

A noxious weed is a nonnative plant, which is known to be invasive and can be directly poisonous to man, livestock, and wildlife. Noxious weeds compete with crops, rangeland and pastures reducing yields substantially.

It is the duty of each person who owns or controls land in Nebraska to effectively control noxious weeds on his/her property. For more information about Nebraska's Noxious Weeds contact your local [Weed Control Superintendent](#)