

WEED IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

Leafy Spurge (N)

(*Euphorbia spp.*)

ORIGIN: Europe

HABITAT: Fields, pastures, roadsides and waste places.

DESCRIPTION: Perennial, spreading by seeds but also has persistent vertical and horizontal underground rootstocks on which shoot buds are produced, all part of the plant containing a milky juice.

ROOTS: Woody, covered with thick bark which produces pink buds.

STEMS: In clumps often forming dense and extensive stands, erect, hairless, up to 75 cm high.

LEAVES: Four to 10 cm long and 0.6-1.3 cm wide, spirally arranged, hairless.

FLOWERS: Very small and inconspicuous, greenish-yellow in colour and borne in umbrella-like clusters which are more like dense tufts of small leaves than ordinary flowers.

SEEDS: When the seed pods dry out they explode and eject the seeds up to five meters; seeds can survive in the soil for at least eight years.

NOTES: The milky juice of leafy spurge and other spurges may cause severe skin rashes in humans. Spurges are poisonous to most livestock, although sheep eat young leafy spurge plants without harmful effect.

CULTURAL CONTROL PRACTICES:

On non-arable land close grazing with sheep will give good control. Sheep prefer spurge to grass if they are put into the pasture early while the spurge is still young.

CULTURAL CHEMICAL CONTROL PRACTICES:

(1) Tillage

a) Begin tillage immediately after harvest and continue until freeze-up and through the following year. Tillage does not need to be deep but must be frequent. Regrowth of spurge should not be allowed to remain above the ground more than five or six days between tillage operations. After a thorough tillage the next spring, seed the land to a crop of wheat or barley. Treat the crop with at least .92 L/ha (600 g/L formulation) of 2,4-D ester (LV). Immediately after harvest resume tillage and repeat the rotation as often as necessary.

b) Follow a) until late June. Stop tillage and allow the spurge to grow until it is in the early bud stage. Spray with 2,4-D amine at 2.24 L/ha. Resume tillage three weeks later and continue until freeze-up.

c) Fall rye can be seeded after a summer of intensive tillage. It should be treated with 2,4-D during the growing year.

(2) Competition

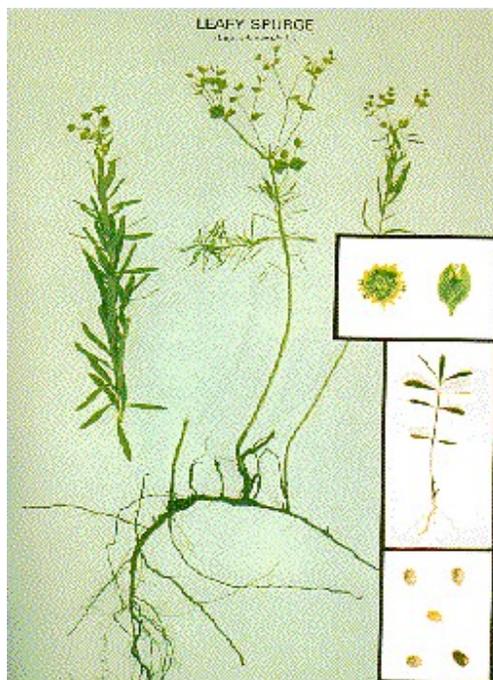
Crested wheatgrass will hold the weed in check if it is sprayed yearly with 2,4-D amine at 2.24 L/ha. Spray when the spurge is in the early bud stage and retreat the same year if regrowth is sufficient. Where possible, carry out a year of intensive tillage before seeding to reduce the stand of spurge and allow better establishment of the grass. Do not overgraze the grass. If used as hay, be careful to prevent movement of spurge by seed. Mow before the spurge has set any seed.

CHEMICAL CONTROL PRACTICES:

1. Monobor - chlorate (sodium metaborate tetrahydrate) at 4.8-7.2 kg/10 square metres can be used for small patches on non-cropland.
2. Tordon 22K (picloram) at 9 L/ha in 100-400 L/ha. Treat at least 5.4 to six m beyond the outermost edges of the patch and inspect it yearly for at least three years. If regrowth occurs from the roots, treat again.

Picloram will give control of spurge with little or no injury to established stands of perennial grasses. Sufficient residues will remain near the soil surface for one or more years (depending on soil type, temperature, and rainfall) to kill emerging spurge seedlings and affect the establishment of legumes and grasses.

3. Amitrol-t (amitrole) at rates as low as 35 L/ha will give topgrowth control, particularly when follow-up treatments are made.



For topgrowth control in crops, refer to the *Guide to Crop Protection*

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Please refer to Saskatchewan Agriculture's *Guide to Crop Protection* for current herbicide rates and application recommendations.

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