

## Leafy Spurge *Euphorbia esula* L.

**Description:** Glabrous perennial standing 2 to 3 feet tall. Plants have milky juice and large root reserves. Leaves are narrow, alternate, 1 to 4 inches long and tightly cluster around stems. Small yellow-green flowers are subtended by two yellow-green, heart shaped bracts. Flowers from June to July. Spreads by seeds from 3-celled capsules or creeping roots.

**Habitat:** Occurs most commonly in pastureland, rangeland, woodland prairies, roadsides, stream and ditchbanks, and waste sites.

**Economics:** Plants cause irritation in digestive tracts of cattle and may cause death in horses. It also reduces grazing productivity, crowds out native vegetation, and is very difficult to eradicate.

**Biological Agent:** Flea beetle and stem borer beetle. Grazing with sheep or goats is the best biological control for leafy spurge because cattle's use of leafy spurge is limited. However, livestock that graze on leafy spurge often experience photosensitivity due to the chemicals in the plant.

Successful chemical control of leafy spurge is dependent on the proper timing of the application and the herbicide used. Leafy spurge is most susceptible to chemicals when in the true flower stage, or when it is in bloom and seeds are developing, typically in mid-June, or when the stems develop regrowth in early to mid-September.

Ref: Noxious Weeds of Grant County

Recommendations for weed control in pastures, Craig Askim