

Leafy Spurge

Euphorbia esula



Common name: Leafy Spurge
Scientific name: *Euphorbia esula*
Family: Euphorbiaceae

Description

Leafy Spurge is a deep-rooted perennial with tiny greenish-yellow flowers. When the plant is injured, a milky white sap will flow out that may cause severe irritation to human skin. The plant mainly multiplies by growing shoots from the extensive root system. It may also grow from seed. Leafy Spurge is considered noxious throughout most of its range including BC and Alaska.

Range in Yukon

Known only from the vicinity of Dawson City.

Similar Species

Cypress Spurge (*Euphorbia cyparissias*), which is a non-invasive garden plant in Haines, Alaska.



Photo: Matt Ball, YG

Ecological Impact

This invasive plant can form large monospecific stands. Most grazing animals avoid it.

Control

Leafy Spurge is extremely difficult to remove once established due to its extensive root system, making it one of the top 10 invasive plants in North America. Plants require depletion of nutrient reserves in the root system, prevention of seed production and prevention of dispersal. Burning and mowing are ineffective. Annual herbicide application and hand-pulling may deplete the root system. Rhizomes and flowering plants must be disposed of through burning.