



Whatcom Weeds

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board 322 N. Commercial St. Bellingham WA 98225
(360) 715-7470 www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/weeds

MOLEPLANT

Euphorbia lathyris

THREAT: Mole plant is also called caper, paper or gopher spurge, and is native to Europe. All parts of the plant are poisonous, causing nausea, vomiting and diarrhea if ingested. The white, milky sap causes skin irritation and blistering, sometimes severe. It grows in sun and partial shade, and is drought tolerant. Mole plant has been known to become weedy in landscapes, roadsides and pastures. It is currently on the Washington State Noxious Weed Board's Monitor List (non-regulatory).

DESCRIPTION: Mole plant is a succulent that grows as an annual, biennial, or perennial. It has blue-green, waxy, lance-shaped leaves with conspicuous white mid-veins. Leaves can be up to 6 inches long and 1 inch wide, and grow in opposite pairs along the stem. The plant grows erectly, up to a height of about 3 feet. Mole plant has small green to yellow-green flowers near the top of the plant, and flowers in May and June. It has both male and female flowers, with both types being found on the same plant. Flowers produce a three-lobed, green seed capsule.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: Mole plant can be controlled through manual and chemical methods. Small infestations can be pulled or dug. Gloves and long sleeves should be worn to avoid contact with the skin. Contact the weed board for site-specific chemical recommendations.

