



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

SPURGE LAUREL

Daphne laureola

THREAT: Spurge laurel, a shrub native to Western Europe and the Mediterranean, was introduced into North America as a garden ornamental. It has escaped cultivation, invading roadsides, parks and wooded areas. Spurge laurel can replace native understory plants in forested areas, and can form large single-species stands. It tolerates a wide range of environmental conditions, but grows best in partial to deep shade. Spurge laurel reproduces both by seed and vegetatively, by sprouting from lateral roots. The berries are eaten by birds, which aids in seed dispersal. All parts of the plant are poisonous to humans, as well as to dogs and cats, and the sap can cause severe skin and eye irritation.



DESCRIPTION: Spurge laurel is an evergreen shrub that grows up to 3-4 feet tall. Whorls of dark green, shiny, leathery leaves grow at the ends of the branches. Leaves are oblong in shape, 1-5 inches long and ½ to 1 inch wide. Spurge laurel flowers in late winter and early spring, producing small (less than ½ inch long) yellow-green flowers. The flowers, which are tubular and fragrant, grow in small clusters at the base of leaves, near the tops of the stems. Oval, black berries are produced in early summer. Spurge laurel is slow-growing and long-lived.



MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: Spurge laurel can be controlled through mechanical and chemical means. Small infestations can be hand dug. Control may also be possible by cutting the plant off; making sure the cut is below the ground surface. Care should be taken to prevent the sap from coming into contact with the skin or eyes. Respiratory irritation has also been reported from inhaled droplets of sap. Contact the weed board for site-specific chemical recommendations.