Leafy spurge

Euphorbia esula L. Spurge Family

Key identifying traits

- Showy pairs of yellow-green, heart shaped bracts (often mistaken for flowers)
- □ Entire plant contains a milky juice (sap)
- Roots are extensive with pink buds for new shoots or roots
- □ Leaves are alternate, narrow, 1 to 4 inches long
- Single stalks or multiple stems, up to 3 feet tall
- □ True flowers are yellow-green but inconspicuous
- $f \Box$ Seeds are contained in a 3-celled capsule

Biology and ecology

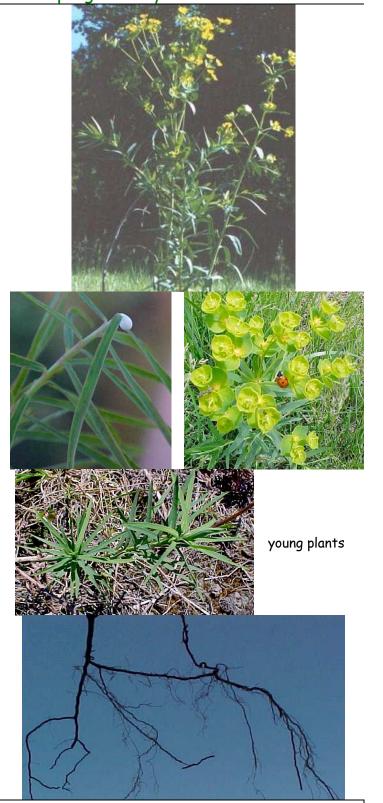
- Perennial; reproduces by vigorous root stalks and seed; seed capsules explode when dry, projecting seeds up to 20 feet
- > Sap can be an extreme irritant to man or beast
- Invades a wide variety of sites- dry hillsides, wet meadows, riparian areas, roadsides
- Once plants are well established (3 years) large nutrient reserves in the extensive root system make control difficult & expensive and eradication nearly impossible
- Forms dense stands grazed only by goats/sheepControl

Prevention- Learn to identify the plant; know your property; beware of fill dirt, hay and seed from outside your area

Biological - Several used in combination with sheep and with herbicides to combat extensive infestations in the mountain west; trial colony only in Stevens Co

Cultural - Competitive vegetation helps but does not stop infestations

Mechanical - Persistent, almost zealous digging or cultivation is required to be at all successful Chemical - A few are effective if applied using the correct rates, timing, mixtures, and adjuvants; most effective herbicides generally require a pesticide license. Many years required. Monitor for several years after last top growth is seen.



Where found - Small infestations found scattered around Stevens County; active ID and cost share control programs have limited the acres involved to less than 100