

Weed of The Week:

Leafy Spurge

(*Euphorbia esula*)



Weed description:

Leafy spurge is a member of the Spurge family and was introduced from Europe in the late 1800's. This aggressive, creeping perennial will reproduce from seed and from its extensive root system. These roots can grow to depths of 30 feet. The overall height of the plant will range from 1 to 3 feet. The leaves are deep green in color, narrow, are alternate on the stem, and will range in length from 1 to 4 inches. Flowers are small and enclosed by a pair of distinctively colored yellowish-green bracts that have the appearance of a flower. Every part of the plant has a milky latex substance, which can be damaging eyes and skin.

Distribution:

Distribution of leafy spurge is widespread throughout western Arapahoe County in riparian areas, pastures and in urban areas such as lawns, gardens and landscaped areas. Currently the State of Colorado has roughly 74,000 infested acres and there are 5 million infested acres in 29 states.

Why is it a problem?

Leafy spurge is a problem to riparian areas, rangeland, pastures and grasslands because it decreases the amount of usable forage for grazing animals. It can also reduce land value, reduce wildlife habitat and forage, displace native plants, and decrease native plant and animal diversity. By displacing native plants and animals, dense infestations threaten natural ecosystems and nature reserves by fragmenting plant and animal habitat. This plant is extremely difficult to control because of its resistance to herbicides, seed dispersal methods and extensive underground root system.



If you would like more information contact:

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