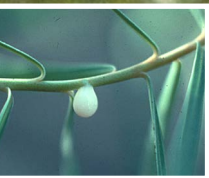


Leafy spurge



Leafy spurge

(*Euphorbia esula* L.)

Leafy spurge is a long-lived perennial that spreads by root and seed. The plant grows 2 to 3 feet tall, with alternate, bluish-green narrow leaves about 2 inches long. Showy yellow bracts appear in May and June, but the true flowers are small and green. Seed pods contain three gray-brown, oblong seeds that mature in mid-July. The plant contains latex, so most animals avoid grazing until late fall.

Leafy spurge is found in all 53 North Dakota counties and forms dense stands that crowd out other plants and reduces grazing capacity. Patches spread 1 to 3 feet per year underground and roots will grow 15 feet or more in depth. The root contains a large nutrient reserve which sustains the plant for several years and numerous buds which allow the plant to spread as cut pieces in gravel and on tillage equipment.

Sheep and goats will graze leafy spurge but will not reduce infestation.

