

Leafy Spurge Control

Across Manitoba, leafy spurge is a threat to biodiversity in nature lands and agricultural lands. The cost of leafy spurge infestations to Manitobans exceeds \$20 million per year.

Leafy Spurge is listed on the World Conservation Union's list of 100 worst invasive species and it is estimated that over 340,000 acres were infested in Manitoba in 1999. Since 1999, the number of infested acres has continued to increase across Manitoba.

Leafy spurge, a non-native species to North America, is a noxious perennial weed that has rapidly spread across much of North America. The plant is a long-lived and hardy plant. Quite distinctive during its blooming period, the vegetative form of leafy spurge is often overlooked, giving it time to establish. Each plant ranges in height from 16-32 inches and flowers in June-July. Seed dispersal occurs from late July to early August.


Leafy spurge spreads rapidly through seed and vegetative reproduction. Each leafy spurge plant can produce 140 seeds, with most seeds remaining viable for eight years. Leafy spurge roots can reach a depth of 26 feet and extend 15 feet across.

The best defence against leafy spurge is early detection and treatment of new infestation patches. There is no single control method that will always work. The most effective control is to take an integrated management approach (combine a variety of techniques). Control techniques need to be customized to individual infestations, however, common techniques include herbicide applications, cultivation, mowing, burning, multi-species grazing, bio-control agents (beetles and moths), and forage competition.

New infestations often occur as the result of




disturbance. Avoid transporting forage, straw, soil, or gravel from leafy spurge infested areas. Clean vehicles and equipment when moving from infested areas as seed and root fragments can cause new infestations.



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