



2015 CMP Forum: People, Climate and Terrestrial Invasive Species



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- **Leafy Spurge**
- (Euphorbia esula)
- **Roots:** Numerous pink buds, deep, reddish-brown, spreading, large nutrient reserves.
- **Stems:** Erect, smooth, branched at the top, normally 1-2 feet tall.
- **Leaves:** Alternate, narrow, length 1 to 4 inches
- **Seed:** Born in exploding capsules that can expel seed to 15 feet, longevity 5 to 8 years.
- **Flowers:** yellowish-green to yellowish-orange surrounded by yellow-green bracts.
- **Origin:** Eurasia, thought to have entered the USA as a crop seed contaminant.
- **Poisoning:** Milky latex sap throughout the plant may cause dermatitis on human skin. Toxic to cattle, sheep and goats do not seem to be affected.

- The estimated annual economic impact of leafy spurge in the four-state region of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming is estimated to be \$130 million (Leitch *et al.* 1994).





















- Sheep and goats favor leafy spurge, and sheep gain weight faster on the weed than on grass. The effects on the spurge population are varied. Continuous grazing throughout eight summers in Saskatchewan reduced the seedbank from 3,500 seeds to 15 seeds per square meter of ground. Another study found that continuous sheep grazing over a four-year period reduced leafy spurge populations by more than 90%. Keep in mind that continuous grazing can have strongly negative effects on other desirable plant species.





Targeted grazing is the application of a specific kind of livestock at a determined season, duration, and intensity to accomplish defined vegetation or landscape goals









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