

Leafy spurge *Euphorbia esula* L.

Family: Euphorbiaceae (Spurge family)

Life cycle: Perennial reproducing by seed and rhizomes.

Habitat: Pasture, roadsides, prairies; more prevalent in western Iowa

General description: Erect, branching plant reaching heights of 3 ft. Stems and leaves emit white sap when cut. Leaves are oval to lanceolate, up to 4 in long with smooth margins. Flowers are surrounded by showy, yellow-green bracts.

Key ID traits: Milky sap, lanceolate leaves.

Similar species: Cypress spurge has a similar growth habit, but is much smaller and leaves are 1 to 1.5 in long.

Miscellaneous: Leafy spurge has been one of the largest problems in rangeland of the northern plains. There has been success with biological control in western states following introducing of several insects from leafy spurge's native region (Europe/Asia).

