

“B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant,
but may have limited distribution in some counties

Myrtle spurge
Euphorbia myrsinites

Other common names: creeping spurge,
donkey tail spurge

USDA symbol: EUMY2
ODA rating: B



Introduction: Native to Eurasia, myrtle spurge is an attractive low-growing ornamental escapee. It doesn't thrive well in competitive grasslands instead preferring open dry rocky soils.

Distribution: Populations of myrtle spurge are reported in the NE Oregon counties. It is also reported in Klamath and Wasco counties.

Description: Perennial; blooms in early spring. Grows 4 to 6 inches tall. Leaves alternately arranged in close spirals around the fleshy, trailing, blue-green stems. Flowers inconspicuous and surrounded by a showy yellow green bract.

This plant prefers well-drained, dry to moist soils in partial shade to full sun. Myrtle spurge is an escaped ornamental inhabiting disrupted areas and non-crop areas. It grows well in zones 5-9 and is known to like dry rocky areas as well.

Impacts: Originally planted as a rock garden ornamental, the species has escaped and is spreading on to open lands in dryer parts of the state. Seeds can be ejected when plants are disturbed, sticking to wildlife hair and enabling transport far from the parent plants. Aside from displacing desirable native species, the plant invades playgrounds and parks in some states. The sap of myrtle spurge is caustic and creates rashes, swelling and blistering of the skin and is a human health concern.

Biological controls: One approved biological control agent, a leafy spurge flea beetle, has had a high survival rate on myrtle spurge in laboratory studies.

