

(revision date:4/7/2021)

**Weeds: Spurges (Prostrate spurges)(Chamaesyce spp.  
(Euphorbia spp.))**

family: Euphorbiaceae

cycle Annual

plant type: Broadleaf

**Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful plant problem management.**

### ***Biology***

There are four prostrate weedy spurges that are common in the western United States. All four species are annual plants with opposite leaves and milky juice. Spotted spurge (*Chamaesyce maculata*) has hairy stems and hairy, dark green leaves with a distinct purple spot on each leaf. Small, pinkish flowers are produced in the leaf axils. The branches of spotted spurge may be upright, with some branching, but many other species are prostrate. Ground spurge (*C. prostrata*) is similar to spotted spurge, but lacks the purple spots. Both thyme-leaved spurge (*C. serpyllifolia*) and ridge-seeded spurge (*C. glyptosperma*) have smooth stems and leaves. Thyme-leaved spurge has slightly toothed leaf margins, especially at the tips. Ridge-seeded spurge has smooth-margined leaves and seeds that appear corrugated.

**SPECIAL INFORMANTION:** The milky sap of spurges can irritate or blister the skin and can also irritate the eyes. Avoid eye or skin contact with sap. Most *Chamaesyce* and *Euphorbia* species are considered toxic.

### ***Habitat***

Spurges are commonly found on dry, bare sites. They prefer sandy or gravelly soils.

### ***Management Options***

#### **Non-Chemical Management**

- ~ Reduce weed establishment by maintaining a healthy planting or turf area to provide competition.
- ~ Cultivation (rototilling or hoeing) will effectively eliminate plants.
- ~ Reduce weed infestation by handpulling weeds.
- ~ Careful digging is useful to manage weed populations. However, digging can carry undesirable weed seed to the surface and foster further germination.

***Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!***

#### **Chemical Management**

***IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides***

Glyphosate products should be applied as spot treatments only! NOTE: Some ingredients listed here are only available in combination. Read the label carefully on combination products to make sure the product is suitable for your specific situation.

Landscape Areas	Turf Areas	Bare Ground Areas
- glyphosate - dichlobenil - oryzalin - trifluralin - products containing triclopyr	- triclopyr	- glyphosate - triclopyr

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*Images*



*~ Caption: Prostrate spurge with flowers  
~ Photo by: D.G. Swan*



*~ Caption: Prostrate spurge rosette  
~ Photo by: D.G. Swan*



*~ Caption: Milky fluid exuding from spurge stem  
~ Photo by: Washington Noxious Weed Control Board*



~ Caption: *Prostrate spurge cut stem*  
~ Photo by: *D.G. Swan*



~ Caption: *Leafy spurge flowers*  
~ Photo by: *Washington Noxious Weed Control Board*



~ Caption: *Petty spurge*  
~ Photo by: *T.W. Miller*



~ Caption: *Spotted spurge*  
~ Photo by: *T. W. Miller*