



ARE THERE DANGEROUS STRANGERS ON YOUR PROPERTY?

There probably are! They're called noxious weeds. Noxious weeds are the most dangerous threat facing Colorado's natural areas. Noxious weeds can easily spread from your property to public lands. It is your responsibility to remove noxious weeds from your property.

This article will tell you what you need to know about one noxious weed that may be found on or near your property: **MYRTLE SPURGE**

MYRTLE SPURGE
Euphorbia myrsinites

Also known as:
Creeping Spurge
Donkey Tail (spurge)



WHY ARE NOXIOUS WEEDS SO DANGEROUS?

Noxious weeds are plants that are not native to Colorado and are mandated by law to be controlled. They have no natural enemies here to control their populations. Their seeds are easily spread by wind, water, tires, clothing, plus domestic and wild animals. Once noxious weeds become established in an area, they crowd out surrounding native plants by stealing precious moisture, nutrients and sunlight. This change in the plant community harms the local wildlife community. Without the native plants they depend on, native wildlife numbers can drop drastically in weed-infested areas.



Escaped Myrtle Spurge growing wild in foothills near Boulder. Note how native plants won't grow next to the Spurge.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Myrtle Spurge is an ornamental that some people once planted in their yards. It is a perennial that produces new stems from the taproot each year. The plants are 4 to 6 inches tall, have trailing stems, and fleshy, blue-green, triangle-shaped leaves. In the spring they produce clusters of small yellow flowers on top of each stem.

Myrtle spurge is not only dangerous to native plants and wildlife; **it is dangerous to you and your family.** The most common victims of myrtle spurge are children who unassumingly pick the pretty flowers.



Myrtle spurge produces a toxic, milky latex which **causes severe blister-like burns if it touches your skin**. If it gets in your eyes, seek medical attention!

IT'S AGAINST THE LAW!

The Colorado Noxious Weed Act, §§ 35-5.5-101-119 C.R.S (2003) designates myrtle spurge as a Class A Noxious Weed that must be eradicated. It is a violation of this law to allow myrtle spurge to “produce seed or develop other reproductive propagules.” To read the complete act, visit: www.ag.state.co.us



HOW CAN YOU COMPLY WITH THE LAW?

- Remove myrtle spurge from your property by digging up mature plants and pulling up new seedlings.
- Alternatives to planting Myrtle Spurge include native plants such as Sulphur Flower (*Erigeron umbellatum*) or Kinnikinnick (*Artocostaphylos uva-ursi*)
- Protect yourself from the toxic sap, wear gloves, long sleeves, pants and eye protection when handling this plant. If you choose to handpull, wear VERY thick gloves because the milky latex is highly toxic.
- Myrtle spurge, also called Donkey tail, is extremely difficult to control with herbicides because of the thick, waxy cuticle, although some results have been shown with Roundup. If you have tried Roundup and it is not working, try spraying the plants with soapy water first, let dry and then spray the Roundup again. Roundup is a systemic, non-selective herbicide, it will kill anything you spray it on. Other weed killers that may work will include herbicides that contain 2,4-D (Weed-B-Gone) or Dicamba, (available in a Monsanto product called Trimec, which combines 2,4-D and dicamba). These products are selective to broadleaf weeds and safe to use on or near lawns. Follow all manufacturers' directions for safe application when using any herbicide.
- If the plants are in flower, be sure to bag the plants carefully and take them to a solid waste landfill. Myrtle spurge reproduces primarily by seed and is capable of projecting seeds up to 15 feet. It has been noted that roots broken by cultivation can also form new plants.
- Do not buy or plant or share myrtle spurge. It is **ILLEGAL** to sell this plant in Colorado.
- If you see myrtle spurge on public or private lands in the City of Longmont, report it to the proper agency – **CITY OF LONGMONT CODE ENFORCEMENT @ 303-651-8695 or 303-651-8321.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON NOXIOUS WEEDS, CONTACT THESE AGENCIES:

City of Longmont Code Enforcement
Colorado Weed Management Association
Colorado Department of Agriculture
CSU Extension

303-651-8695 or 303-651-8321
www.cwma.org
www.ag.state.co.us/dpi
www.coopext.colostate.edu/boulder

Code Enforcement Division
City of Longmont