



Control Options for Spurge Laurel

General Information

Spurge laurel (*Daphne laureola*), a shrub native to Western Europe and the Mediterranean, was introduced into North America as a garden ornamental. It has escaped cultivation, invading roadsides, parks and wooded areas. Spurge laurel reproduces both by seed and vegetatively, by sprouting from lateral roots. The berries are eaten by birds, which aids in seed dispersal. All parts of the plant are poisonous to humans, as well as to dogs and cats.



Manual/Mechanical Techniques

Small infestations of spurge laurel can be hand dug or pulled using a weed-pulling tool, such as a Weed Wrench™. Weed Wrenches and Extractigators™ are available for loan from the Whatcom County Noxious Weed Program. Please call **(360)778-6232** or **(360)778-6234** for more information. Young plants (3 yrs. or less) will often die after being cut close to the ground. For older plants, control may also be possible by cutting the plant off, but make sure the cut is below the ground surface. **The sap of spurge laurel contains irritating toxins. Care should be taken to prevent the sap from coming into contact with the skin or eyes. Respiratory irritation has also been reported from inhaled droplets of sap.**

Chemical Recommendations

Spurge laurel can be managed using specific herbicides. When using herbicides, always read and follow label directions for rates, spraying conditions, personal protective equipment and grazing intervals. If spraying is the chosen option, spray late in the evening to reduce the direct impact on pollinating insects. Do not spray when it is windy or raining, or when rain is forecast. Herbicides should not be sprayed within 60 feet of water bodies and creeks, without further consultation with the Noxious Weed Board. Remember, it is the herbicide applicators responsibility to apply the product in accordance to the instructions on the label.

Spurge laurel can be controlled using an herbicide containing the active ingredient *triclopyr* (Crossbow™, Lilly Miller's Blackberry and Brush Killer™, others) as a cut-stump treatment. Plants should be cut near the ground and the stump should be treated with herbicide as soon as possible after cutting. Pay careful attention to label instructions and follow directions closely for woody plant and brush control.

NEVER apply RoundUp® or other herbicides to standing water unless they are distinctly labeled for aquatic use. Ingredients in non-aquatic products may be toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms. Aquatic formulations of herbicides are generally only available to licensed pesticide applicators in Washington State. If the target plants are immediately adjacent to or are in standing water, a state permit may be required in order to treat those plants with an aquatically approved herbicide.

- **Always read and understand the label of the herbicides you choose to use.**
- **More is NOT better when using herbicides, and may actually hinder the ability of the herbicide to injure the target plant if the solution is too strong. This wastes money and effort and puts more product into the environment than is necessary. ALWAYS follow the recommended rates on the label.**
- **With all herbicides, when you apply them is as important as how you apply them.**

The mention of a specific product brand name in this document is not, and should not be construed as an endorsement or as a recommendation for the use of that product. Herbicide information is taken from the King County (Seattle, WA) and Thurston County (Olympia, WA) Noxious Weed Programs.