

# Spurge | *Euphorbia humistrata*/*Euphorbia maculata*

## Invasive weed

*Euphorbia humistrata* (prostrate spurge) and *Euphorbia maculata* (spotted spurge) are an annual invasive weed that flourishes in the summer in the greater Phoenix area. Due to the growth pattern and germination habits of both weeds, they often choke out turfgrasses, especially in areas that have no turf in them, or within turf that is in poor condition.

Prostrate spurge spreads by seed and is low growing, forming dense mats of stems and leaves. It features oval leaves which are pale green on pink, hairy stems that root at the nodes of each plant as it grows. Spotted spurge is easily identified by the leaves—pale reddish-green to dark green with a distinctive maroon splotch in the center. It has a taproot and spreads in mats, like prostrate spurge.

Both types of spurge ooze a milky, sticky sap from broken stems or leaves. This substance is very irritating to the skin, so if pulling the weeds by hand, wear gloves! This sap is also toxic to cows and horses, so inspections of any pasture land or arena space is a must to prevent injuries.

## Treatment | Eradication

Although spurge can be controlled through manually pulling the weeds, this technique can lead to the greater problem of the seeds spreading to other areas in your lawn or garden. And raking spurge only spreads the seeds into the soil, giving it new life to take hold in a different place. Mowing also will not eradicate spurge: the low-laying mats remain unscathed by the blades.



Chemical control methods such as pre- and post-emergents are the best way to control spurge. A pre-emergent herbicide such as Barricade is ideal for treating spurge, and is applied when overnight temps reach 55 degrees for three consecutive nights. Post-emergent solutions include Ferti-Lome Weed-Out or Dismiss Turf Herbicide, both designed to treat spurge infestations after they have become visible. As with manually pulling this weed, safety precautions should be taken to

avoid injury to your skin or eyes.



INVASIVE PLANTS & WEEDS