

CONTROLLING SPURGE



A Troublesome Weed

Euphorbia supina, or prostrate spurge, is a low-growing weed that forms a dense mat often found under other plants. Spurge is native to the United States and has a shallow taproot and stems that exude a milky white sap. Spurge leaves are small, opposite each other on the stems, green or red and often have purple spots. This weed germinates and thrives in dry, hot climates and tolerates some shade, but prefers direct sunlight. Like any other opportunistic weed, it takes advantage of disturbed soils or stressed turf areas.

Spurge is a late-germinating, summer annual with small and inconspicuous flowers. Spurge blooms anytime between the months of June and October. A single spurge plant is capable of producing thousands of seeds each flowering cycle.



Control without Chemicals

Because spurge has a relatively shallow taproot, it is easy to remove manually from granite areas and planters. Infested turf areas are more difficult to control manually simply because young spurge plants are

hard to spot among blades of grass. The best way to deter spurge in turf is to encourage turf density through proper watering and fertilization.

Control with Chemicals

Spraying spurge with an herbicide is the easiest way to control this troublesome weed in turf areas. However, you have to use the correct herbicide in the correct landscape area. Roundup is safe and widely available at any home improvement store; however, Roundup can only be sprayed on spurge in granite areas. Simply follow the instructions on the label making sure not to spray Roundup on spurge growing in turf. Roundup is a nonselective systemic killer, which means plants or grasses absorb the chemical into their root system and the chemical cannot differentiate between plants you want and weeds.

To kill spurge growing in turf areas, use an herbicide that targets broadleaf weeds, such as Amine 4. These types of herbicides can only be applied by an Arizona Office of Pest Management Licensed Pest Applicator. To find a company with a Licensed Applicators, visit www.sb.state.az.us/CompanyDirectory.php.

