

AA. Myrtle Spurge
 (“Donkey Tail Spurge”)
 (*Euphorbia myrsinites*)



Key Characteristics:

Myrtle spurge is a highly invasive ornamental plant, popular for use in xeriscapes and rock gardens. This plant is rapidly expanding into sensitive ecosystems, displacing native vegetation, reducing forage, and, in some cases, injuring wildlife. Myrtle spurge is a **low-growing, tap-rooted perennial** with **trailing stems** of **fleshy, blue-green, leaves**. This growth form has given rise to the alternate name, “Donkey-Tail Spurge.”

Inconspicuous **flowers** are surrounded by **yellow-green petal-like bracts** that first appear in early spring. Myrtle spurge reproduces by seed and plant fragments, and is capable of projecting seeds up to 15 feet. This plant exudes toxic, milky latex which can cause severe irritation to skin and mucus membranes.

Locations:

This plant has been known to occupy ornamental gardens on Red Mountain and in Brush Creek Village, the Crystal River Valley, Emma, the City of Aspen, and the Town of Snowmass Village. Large infestations of Myrtle Spurge exist in the City of Glenwood Springs.

Biological control:

No known biological controls at this time.

Cultural control:

Do not plant Myrtle Spurge. If present, do not allow to seed. Re-vegetate disturbed Areas.

Mechanical control:

For small patches of Myrtle Spurge, diligent pulling/digging can be effective. It is important to get the entire root and not leave any plant fragments behind. Make sure to wear protective clothing to protect your skin and eyes against the irritating latex.

Chemical control:

Contact Pitkin County Land Management Department for more specific information about herbicide products, application rates, and equipment calibration.

Native Alternatives:

There are several native alternatives to Myrtle Spurge for your xeriscaping or rock garden. These include Sulfur Flower (*Erigeron umbellatum*), Kinnikinnick (*Artocostaphylos uva-ursi*), Oregon Grape (*Mahonia repens*), and Yellow Stonecrop (*Amerosedum lanceolatum*).