



Photo courtesy of WA State Noxious Weed Control Board Website

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Daphne, daphne spurge, daphne-laurel, laurel-leaved daphne, olive-spurge, wood laurel, copse laurel

DESCRIPTION

Spurge laurel is an evergreen shrub that grows from 0.5 to 1.5 meters and can grow upright or arched at the base and spread upward. Young branches are green while mature branches are grey with a yellow hue. The leaves are alternate and spirally arranged, and are dark green and shiny on top and lighter on the leaf underside. The leaves cluster at the shoot tips. The yellow-green, bell-shaped flowers bloom between March and May and emit a honey-like fragrance. The fruits are berries that are green at first and then blacken when ripened.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Leaves alternate and spirally arranged and cluster at the shoot tips.
- Leaves dark green and shiny on top and lighter on the underside.
- yellow-green, bell-shaped flowers that emit a honey-like fragrance.
- Green unripe and black ripe berries.

WHEN TO FIND SPURGE LAUREL

It is found year-round, blooming March - May.

WHERE TO FIND SPURGE LAUREL

It can be found along roadsides and in open, moist woods in the lowlands.

WHAT TO DO

Please report but do not try to pull this plant. Mark the location with a GPS or on a map. If possible, take a photograph.

CAUTION:

This shrub has toxic compounds in the berries, bark, and sap, so use extreme caution and protective gloves when handling this plant.

Spurge Laurel

Daphne laureola

This European native has become a growing problem in the Pacific Northwest. It has been documented in Washington and Oregon and is creeping into coastal British Columbia.

Spurge laurel reproduces by seed and vegetatively through the production of root sprouts. Seeds are primarily dispersed by birds and rodents.

Spurge laurel poses a particular threat to Douglas fir forests and Garry Oak woodlands of the Pacific Northwest. The shrub can form thick patches that block out sunlight, out-compete native flora for water and nutrients, alter the soil chemistry, and potentially alter natural succession. The leaves, bark, and berries of the plant are also toxic to humans, dogs, and cats. Studies show that the most effective way of eliminating spurge laurel is with herbicidal treatment; manual methods have produced some successful results, but precaution must be taken when using such methods because of the plants toxins.

REFERENCES

Written Findings of the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board for Daphne Laureola. September 2006. On Line at:http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/weed_list/weed_listings_07/spurge_1isting.htm



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