



Photo courtesy of WA State Noxious Weed Control Board Website

## 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

Seedlings and young plants can be hand-pulled, but be sure to wear protective gloves. Larger plants can be pulled with a weed wrench or similar tool. Root should be removed to avoid re-growth from root sprouts. After pulling, the area should be monitored for new seedlings and covered with a deep mulch. Cutting close to the ground is also effective, but due to the plant's ability to sprout from suckers, it may be advisable to apply herbicide to stems immediately following cutting. See the brush control portion of the PNW Weed Management handbook (<http://weeds.ippc.orst.edu/pnw/weeds/>) for specific herbicide recommendations.

This fact sheet was produced by The Nature Conservancy in Oregon's Invasives-Watch Program.

# 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.

## CAUTION:

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

## 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\\_listing.htm](http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/weed_list/weed_listings_07/spurge_listing.htm)

King County Noxious Weed Program

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsandplants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/spurge-laurel.aspx>



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