

May is Time to Control Leafy Spurge

In my travels around the county, I have seen many patches of leafy spurge. Leafy spurge is a noxious weed according to the Nebraska Seed Law and the Nebraska Noxious Weed Law. Leafy spurge is found primarily on untilled land such as pastures, range, roadsides, woodlands and farmsteads. It is mildly poisonous to cattle and can effectively ruin the carrying capacity of patches where it is growing because cattle soon learn to avoid grazing near it.

Identification

Leafy spurge is a persistent, deep-rooted perennial which reproduces by seeds and roots. Leafy spurge has a somewhat woody crown below the soil surface. Each crown area produces several upright stems giving the plant a clump-like appearance. In addition, new stems arise from buds on lateral, secondary roots. See Figure 1. Stem growth starts in April, making leafy spurge an early, vigorous competitor with forage and pasture plants. The plant bears numerous linear-shaped

leaves with smooth margins. Leaves have a bluish-green color but turn yellowish or reddish-orange in late summer.

Leafy spurge produces a flat-topped cluster of yellowish-green, petal-like structures called bracts, which bear the true spurge flowers. The showy, yellow bracts appear in May and give the plant a "blooming" appearance. See Figure 2. The true spurge flowers, however, develop about 10 days later and have small, green bracts. See Figure 3. The distinction between yellow bract appearance and true flowering is important for timing herbicide applications. Spring applied herbicides are more effective when applied on plants with developing true flowers. Seeds are borne in pods which contain three gray-brown,



Figure 2 — yellow bract appearance

sometimes speckled, oblong, smooth seeds. At maturity, pods pop open, throwing seeds up to 15 feet from the parent plant. About 140 seeds are produced per stem and seeds may remain viable in the soil for up to eight years. Leafy spurge peak germination time is late April to early May. New seedlings develop throughout the summer but usually do not flower during the first year. Leafy spurge seedlings can vegetatively reproduce from root buds within 7-10 weeks after germination.

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Control

Chemical control recommendations listed in the *2004 Guide for Weed Management—EC03-130* include: 2,4-D (4L) at two quarts per acre at flower bud stage (for

suppression of seed production — annual treatments necessary). Grazon P+D at two quarts per acre at flower bud stage (for suppression of seed production and gradual stand reduction over several years). Tordon 22K at one to two quarts per acre (retreatment necessary for several years). Plateau at 8-12 ounces per acre in the fall two weeks before frost. Note: Plateau is no longer being sold to private individuals or commercial applicators. However, existing stocks of Plateau can be used according to label directions. Spot treatment of seedlings and shoots emerging from deep root buds will be necessary for many years after a stand appears to be controlled. Always follow label directions. (TD)



Figure 1 — lateral, secondary roots



Figure 3 — true flowering



10 foot trench showing the length of exposed roots.

Scrap Tire Collection May 15 & 16

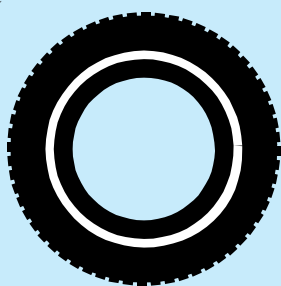
Note: Last issue's NEBLINE printed incorrect dates — May 15 & 16 are the correct dates.

Individuals will have an opportunity to get rid of scrap tires that may have accumulated around your place. Tires (without the wheels) will be accepted May 15 and 16 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Shoemakers south parking lot 48th and West O Street, Lincoln. Three hundred and fifty tons of tires will be accepted in this recycling effort on a first-come, first-served basis. Please have a count of the number of tires you are dropping off.

This program is funded through a grant from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and hosted by officials from Sanitary Improvement District Number 6.

Sorry, this opportunity is open to individuals only — the grant specially prohibits tire dealers.

For more information, call (402) 476-3590. (TD)



Fertilizing Grasses in Pastures

Spring is approaching and cool-season grass pastures soon will green-up. So we should begin thinking about fertilizing. Here's how to decide if it's worth it.

Grass growth is stimulated in pastures by fertilizer just like it is in your lawn. The key to profitable fertilizing of pastures, though, is to combine fertilizer with efficient harvest of the extra growth. Would you fertilize your sweet corn patch and then drive through it just before its ready to harvest? Of course not — you'd knock down and lose much of the produce.

But that's just about what you're doing when you fertilize pastures in spring, and then let

your animals graze continuously on one pasture throughout the growing season. They trample some of the grass, manure and foul some of the grass, bed down on some of the grass and simply refuse to eat some of the grass.

So when all is said and done, less than one-third of the grass your pasture produced will end up in the mouth and stomach of your livestock. It's pretty hard to make fertilizer pay like that.

But fertilizer does pay if you manage grazing so more of what you grow actually gets eaten. This will happen if you subdivide pastures with some cross-fences and control when and where

your animals graze.

Give animals access to no more than one-fourth of your pasture at a time, or even less and then graze off about one-half of the growth before moving to another subdivision. Since your pastures probably grow faster than you can use them anyhow in spring, why not wait until mid-May to fertilize some of them for extra summer growth.

More of your pasture growth will be eaten and more profits will come from fertilizer and pastures. (DJ)

Source: Forage Minute, Bruce Anderson, University of Nebraska Extension Educator

Wheat Plot Tour June 10

Extension will be hosting a wheat variety and disease management plot tour on June 10. Participants are asked to gather at the University of Nebraska field research site just west of 84 Street on Havelock Avenue. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. Coffee and donuts will be served. The plot tour will begin at 9. There is no registration fee.

Dr. Stephen Baenziger will present variety trials containing over 50 experimental lines and blends in the State Variety Trial. Participants will also see some of the university's Clearfield wheat experimental line evaluation trials plus winter barley and triticale varieties. Dr. John Watkins will discuss ongoing wheat disease management trials. Participants will see 15 treatments in the wheat fungicide plot. Most will be registered products and include BASF's Headline, Bayer's Stratego and Folicur and Syngenta's Tilt, Quadris and Quilt. (TD)

Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben Pioneer Farm Family Award

If your family has owned your farm in Lancaster County for 100 years or more, consecutively, you are eligible to apply for the Nebraska Pioneer Farm Awards sponsored by the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben Foundation and the Nebraska Association of Fair Managers.

Honoree's receive an engraved plaque and a gatepost marker as permanent recognition of this milestone. To date, nearly 6,000 families in 93 Nebraska counties have been honored.

If your family qualifies for this special award, please obtain an application from Deanna Karmazin at the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension office in Lancaster County or by calling 441-7180. Applications are due into the Extension office or the Lancaster Event Center by May 1. Winners will be notified no later than June 1 and the award will be presented during a special ceremony at the 2004 Lancaster County Fair.

If you have any further questions regarding this award, please call the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben office at 402-554-9600, extension 100. (DK)

