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## Leafy Spurge

Leon J. Wrage  
*South Dakota State University*

Darrel Deneke  
*South Dakota State University*

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# Extension Extra

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Plant Science

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES / SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY / USDA

## Leafy Spurge

by Leon J. Wrage, Extension agronomist -- weeds,  
and Darrell L. Deneke, interim IPM coordinator

Leafy spurge is an especially difficult noxious weed. Fall control is an essential part of a leafy spurge control program. Retreatment is required for 2,4-D. Fall herbicides are effective where sheep or goats have grazed. Fall is a good time to apply spot treatment herbicides. It is the only time some fencelines and field corners are accessible.

**FALL SETUP:** Plan operations to maximize new shoot emergence. Set-up questions include:

**MOWING** - Early mowing prevents seeding. It's a good system for roadsides, grazing land and in trees.

**GRAZING** - Sheep or goats will graze topgrowth and allow regrowth if removed in late summer.

**TILLAGE** - An option for cultivated fields.

**HERBICIDES** - Fall regrowth usually appears after spring 2,4-D treatment.

### **BEST RESULTS:**

**NEW, ACTIVE GROWTH.** Treating old, mature stems is less effective.

**HIGH SHOOT DENSITY.** A high density of new shoots gives better results than if they are sparse.

**GOOD SOIL MOISTURE.** Treating in dry fall seasons is less effective.

**TREAT BEFORE KILLING FROST.** A warm day in mid to late September is a good target most years. Light frost does not reduce control. Reddish coloration of some leaves does not reduce control if weather is favorable.

**TILLAGE.** Sweep or blade tillage 10 to 14 days after treatment improves results in cultivated fields.

### **GRASS PASTURE/RANGE/ROADSIDES (Follow Label Grazing Restrictions)**

Tordon 22K	1-4 qt	Considerable stand reduction. Use 4 qt/A as a spot treatment. (\$22.75-95.10).
Tordon 22K + 2,4-D ester 4L	1.5 pt+1 qt	Tank-mix. Annual treatment in a 4- to 5-year program. (\$21.70).
2,4-D ester 4L	1.5 qt	Less effective. Use as a repeat application following spring 2,4-D or as a follow up to Tordon spot treatments. (\$5.45).

## CULTIVATED FIELDS (After Harvest)

2,4-D ester 4L	1.5 qt	Considerable stand reduction. Follow with tillage before freezeup. (\$5.45).
Tordon	2 qt	Spot treatment. Fallow, non-irrigated fields in fallow-small grain only. Considerable crop injury for 2 seasons. (\$45.00).
Cultivate		Use sweep or blade tillage at 3- to 4-week intervals from harvest to freezeup.

## SHELTERBELTS

2,4-D amine 4L	1.5 qt	Use only low volatile forms. Use care to avoid spray contact to trees. (\$5.45).
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## HERBICIDES

Tordon 22K 2L (picloram) is approved for use in non-crop, grass pasture and range and in cultivated cropland in small grain rotations. It has foliar activity and extended soil residual. High rates are primarily for spot treatment. Spot treatments in non-irrigated cultivated fields may be made using up to 2 qt/A. For fallow-small grain rotations only. Expect considerable crop injury for 2 years. Lower rates are used alone or in combination with 2,4-D as an annual application in a 4- to 5-year program. Bromegrass stunting or thinning may be noted with rates over 1 qt/A. **RESTRICTIONS:** Avoid drift to trees or sensitive crops. For rates above 2 qt/A, do not harvest hay within 2 weeks of treatment. Do not graze dairy for 2 weeks after treatment. Remove slaughter animals 3 days before slaughter if grazing within 2 weeks after spraying. Avoid water contamination. Do not apply into water or on inner banks or irrigation or drainage ditches where water used for irrigation or domestic purposes may be contaminated. Avoid application on coarse soil (loamy sand or sand) or where the aquifer is shallow. RESTRICTED USE PESTICIDE.

2,4-D requires retreatment each year. Frequently used in field crops and combined with tillage or other herbicides. Ester formulation preferred. **RESTRICTIONS:** Do not graze dairy cattle on treated areas for 7 or 14 days after application, depending on 2,4-D product label. Note other label precautions.

Plateau. New product for leafy spurge control in grass. Labeled for noncrop and CRP only. Residue trials to expand use in grazing or hayland have been initiated. Apply to active growth in fall. Rate is 8 to 12 oz product per acre. Rates of 8 oz in fall and 4 oz/A in spring have performed well. Add metholated seed oil at 2 pt + 2 pt of 28% N per acre. Acts as a growth suppressant on cool season grass; also labeled for restoration of many native, warm season grasses. Results have been promising in SDSU tests.

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