

# MAY WEED WATCH: Myrtle Spurge

Myrtle spurge is a highly invasive ornamental plant, popular for use in xeriscapes and rock gardens. It is a [Colorado A Listed species](#), meaning a complete elimination is required to protect the economic and environmental health of Colorado.

Myrtle spurge is expanding in Elk Springs.



It displaces native vegetation, and, in some cases, injuring wildlife and people – **all parts of this plant are toxic.**

Myrtle spurge contains a milky sap which can cause severe skin irritations along with temporary blindness in certain circumstances. It is poisonous if ingested; causing nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Nothing eats it.

It's a low-growing, tap rooted perennial with trailing stems of fleshy, blue-green leaves. It grows clusters of greenish yellow flowers (in bloom now) - and it launches it's seeds some 15 feet in every direction.

## Eradicating Myrtle Spurge

It grows in crevices and under rocks, so be thorough. For small patches, diligent pulling/digging works - please use gloves:

- Hand-pulling and digging is effective for small patches, especially before flowering ([video](#))
- Use herbicides like Roundup on large patches or stubborn spots
- Ensure the root system is entirely removed to prevent regrowth – dig out and remove soil if necessary
- **Make sure to wear protective clothing to protect your skin and eyes against the irritating latex.**

## Landscaping

Alert your landscapers to be vigilant about plants and soils they bring in. Seeds spread in soils, rocks, and unwashed tires and equipment..

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

Learn more about Colorado's Noxious Weeds, programs, and control measures at [The Colorado Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed Resources](#) .

