

SPURGE LAUREL

CONTROL REQUIRED IN SAN JUAN COUNTY



Spurge Laurel (*Daphne laureola*) is an escaped garden ornamental that is rapidly naturalizing throughout San Juan County. It poses a particular threat to Garry oak woodlands and evergreen forests, shading out native plants and suppressing forest regeneration. Strongly toxic (as are all *Daphnes*), the sap can cause contact dermatitis, and if ingested, severe gastric distress. Several berries may be fatal if eaten by a child. *Daphne* is also poisonous to livestock, dogs and cats.



BE SURE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION:

Spurge laurel is a small shrub with glossy, leathery, evergreen, long, narrow leaves arranged alternately and spirally along branches. Clustered small, greenish- yellow flowers, found in the axes of the leaves, bloom between March and May. This plant may be confused with English or Portugal laurel, *Pieris* and immature rhododendrons.



Spurge laurel may be distinguished from most other common ornamental but non-invasive *Daphnes* by:

- ⇒ **Yellow-green flowers** (rather than white, mauve or pink flowers)
- ⇒ **Blue-black berries** (rather than red berries)

TO REMOVE SPURGE LAUREL FROM YOUR PROPERTY:

- Wear protective clothing, including long pants, long sleeves, gloves and eye protection.
- If exposed to sap, wash affected areas with warm water and soap.
- Work in the winter or spring before berries ripen to reduce spreading by seed.
- Use loppers to cut larger plants beneath the soil, below where the color changes from brown to orange.
- High speed cutters such as gas powered weed eaters volatilize plant toxins that can cause respiratory and eye irritation. Wear appropriate protective gear.
- Pull or dig out seedlings.
- Applying an herbicide to a freshly cut stump will help insure against resprouting.
- A foliar herbicide may be used as a spot treatment.
- For herbicide advice contact the County Noxious Weed Program.
- **DO NOT BURN DAPHNE RESIDUE.**
- Monitor regularly for regrowth.

For alternatives to Spurge Laurel consult the pamphlet "Garden Wise: Non-invasive Plants For Your Garden," available at no cost from the Noxious Weed Control Program or the Master Gardeners Program.

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