

Leafy Spurge Biocontrol Factsheet



Leafy spurge plant



Leafy spurge leaves



Leafy spurge flowers

HOW THEY WORK:

Biological control agents (typically insects) weaken the target plant's seed production and overall plant integrity by feeding on the seed heads, and other parts of the plant, such as their root systems. Biocontrol will not typically get rid of your weeds all together. It is a long-term control strategy and results are usually seen over numerous years.

Biocontrol Agent

Aphthona nigriscutis

TYPE OF AGENT: Root feeding flea beetle

COLLECTABILITY: Mass

ORIGIN: Hungary

INVASIVE PLANTS ATTACKED: Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*)
Cypress spurge (*E. cyparissiae*)

BIOCONTROL AGENT LIFECYCLE:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Overwintering larvae			Pupa		Adult		Adult/ Larvae	Larvae	Overwintering larva		

Larva:

The larvae are white with brown heads and C-shaped. The larvae feed on young and older roots. They disable the plants ability to absorb and store nutrients. This feeding will suppress plant vigour and reproductive ability, delay flowering, and weaken or kill plants.

Adult Beetle:

Measure 3-4 mm long and oval shaped. They have a black cap at the top of their wing covers. The adults emerge in Mid-June and July and begin feeding on leaves. Adults can completely consume small and young leaves. Adult beetles are found high on the plant during warm summer days.



A. nigriscutis larvae



A. nigriscutis adult feeding on leaves



A. nigriscutis adults feeding

More Information:

Classical biocontrol is a long term management tool used in integrated pest management (IPM). IPM involves selecting from a range of manual, mechanical, chemical, cultural and biological control methods to match the management requirements of a specific site. The goal is to maximize effective control and to minimize negative environmental, economic and social impacts. Biocontrol is an important tool in the IPM toolkit. It involves controlling invasive plants, by introducing natural enemies.

The biocontrol's listed are tertiary insects regulated by the BC Ministry of Forests. There are currently 4 leafy spurge biocontrol agents that have been released in BC. The information in this factsheet was created using the Province of British Columbia Government's Biocontrol resources found at www.gov.bc.ca/invasiveplants.



For more information
about the TNRD's
biocontrol program and
how to request insects
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