

Cypress spurge

Euphorbia cyparissias

Description

Introduced to North America as an ornamental plant in the 1860s; widely planted in cemeteries and often called "<u>graveyard weed</u>".

Habit

Erect, herbaceous to semi-woody perennial; grows 6-12 in in height.

Leaves

Numerous, bright green in color, linear in nature, alternate along the stem and in whorls where they subtend the inflorescence; 0.4-1 in long and 0.04-0.1 in wide.

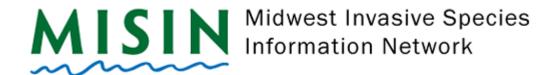
Stems

Erect, semi-woody.

Flowers

Bright yellow-green in color that turn to purple-red as they mature, clustered at the top of plant, the true flowers are small and lack sepals or petals; blooms in May through August.





Fruits and Seeds

The fruit is three lobed and contains 1-3 egg shaped smooth gray seeds; fruits are explosive capsules that split open when mature and throw seed to over 16 ft.

Habitat

Native to Eurasia. Found in meadows, pastures, road edges, cemeteries, right-of-ways, dunes, pannes, coastal headlands, grasslands and calcareous glades. Prefers dry to moist sandy, gravelly or calcareous soils.

Reproduction

Vegetatively through lateral root buds, forming extensive clonal populations; the taproot may reach lengths of approximately 10 ft and give rise to lateral roots, which produce adventitious buds.

Similar

Leafy spurge (Euphorbia esula).

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Manual control can be difficult due to extensive root system; effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate; There are eleven species of European insects (Five chrysomelid beetles in the genus Aphthona and one cecidomyiid fly gall midge, Spurgia esulae Gagne) which have been effective control.

Credits

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