

**Weekly Ag Report**  
**Tom Getts, UCCE Weed and Crops Advisor**  
**August 9, 2017**

Morning Lassen County, this is Tom Getts from the Lassen County Cooperative Extension Office.

Today I want to bring to your attention a weed which has just started to gain a foothold here in our county. The common name of the weed is myrtle spurge, or if you prefer your plant name using the dead language, *Euphorbia Myrsinites*. Earlier this year a resident of Stone's Landing noticed one of his neighbor's ornamental plants spreading out of the beds it was planted in. Pockets of the plants were strewn throughout the neighborhood, along roadsides, and even creeping into BLM sagebrush land. The weed specialist from the BLM Eagle Lake field office identified the plant as myrtle spurge, which is an A rated noxious weed in Colorado. He quickly contacted the Lassen County Ag Department, who sent one of their biologists up to take a sample. The sample was sent down to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, or CDFA, where the identification was confirmed. Indeed, myrtle spurge was growing.

Myrtle spurge is a low growing perennial plant with fleshy leaves. The vegetation is typically a greenish blue color with leaves in an alternate formation. Another common name for it is "donkey tail." The flowers are yellow, and it was in full bloom when I stopped by to check it out in the beginning of May.





In all honesty, it is a beautiful drought tolerant plant, and it is a bummer it is invasive. In areas of Colorado and Utah, the plant has really taken off, forming monocultures crowding out desirable plants that support wildlife and feed livestock. It is a creeping perennial, which can spread by roots, or seed, and it can launch up to 15 feet when ripe. Be careful handling it, as the sap is milky white, and can cause contact dermatitis.

Now is the time to act while the population is small, so it doesn't get a foothold in Lassen County. Early detection rapid response is the way to handle weeds, before the population explodes! If you think you have seen this plant, we want to know about it! Even if it is in your garden, it could escape and threaten our rangelands and natural ecosystems.

Initially the CDFA listed myrtle spurge as a quarantine species, and currently they are considering listing it as an A list species. A list species are legally required to be eradicated from the state because of the potential economic and ecological harm imposed by this species. They are seeking comments on the listing. If you google "myrtle spurge CDFA," it is the first link that comes up. If you click on the link, there is more information and a place to comment.

If you have this plant and would like to report a location or get more information, please feel free to contact me at 251-2650. Help the county out, so we can get rid of myrtle spurge, before it spreads like whitetop or Scotch thistle.