



## Weed of The Week

### Spotted Spurge (*Euphorbia maculata*.)

This week I am continuing with those pesky low growing weeds that like to smother everything that gets in its path. This weeks weed of the week features Spotted Spurge and just like last weeks Common Purslane, this weed has a bad habit of growing low and creeping over desirable horticulture and landscape crops. Spotted Spurge is a low growing summer annual that is actually native to eastern North America. This weed can be found growing in many different environments but prefers compacted poor soil with plenty of sun exposure. Spotted Spurge has a prostrate growth habit reaching height less than 1 ft but growing as wide as 4 ft from a central taproot that can grow as deep as 3 ft. Key identifiers of Spotted Spurge is it ovate leaf that have very fine hairs and opposite growth pattern. The stem is pink in color and also contain very fine hairs. The leaves of the Spotted Spurge have a red to purple colored spots in the center of the leaf. When stems of this plant are broken or injured, a milky sap will be released. The sap that is secreted from Spotted Spurge can be a skin irritant to some people and highly toxic to small ruminants especially sheep. Spotted Spurge reproduces by seed, forming a very small flower without petals but stamens instead. Spotted Spurge plant contain both male and female flowers with pink colored stamens. Seeds are very small (less than 1mm), brown in color, hairy, and wrinkled. One Spotted Spurge plant can produce thousands of seeds and seed will germinate rapidly. Germination of this plant takes place when soil temps reach 70+ degrees and will continue into early fall. The first killing frost will kill this plant but seeds can remain viable for many years. Hand pulling and cultivation before seed production can be a very effective in control. Establishing strong stands of forage or turf can out compete Spotted Spurge. Spott treatments in pastures using 2-4-D or Dicamba products can be very effective as well. In landscape setting, hand pulling can be very effective but spot treatments with glyphosate can be effective as well.

