



ACT
Government

Transport Canberra
and City Services

SAFETY ALERT

Number: 06/2021

Issued: 23 November 2021

EUPHORBIA PLANTS

Health and safety advisors
Workplace managers
Safety notice boards
Health and safety representatives

Description of issue

Euphorbia (commonly known as Spurge and Milkweed) are common garden plants that are becoming more frequent on roadsides, reserves, and other open space areas in the ACT.

Euphorbia has a white milky sap that causes skin irritation and caustic effects when it comes into the contact with the skin.

In contact with mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth), the milky sap can produce extremely painful inflammation. Exposure to recently cut plants can also cause breathing difficulties.



Safety considerations

Euphorbia should be handled with caution.

TCCS employees are advised to wear appropriate full-length clothing, gloves and eye protection while working in close contact with Euphorbia. Face Shields and respirators are optional but should be considered if employees are cutting and handling Euphorbia plants.

Complete a take 5, prior to commencement of Mowing or Whipping. Check for plants that may be present and implement the appropriate controls.



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Mowing operators are advised to take caution if they are cutting an area with Euphorbia present, or use a machine with a sealed cab or windscreen protection.

All staff should save the poison hotline number into their mobile phone **13 11 26**.

First aid and medical assessment

Wash off any milky sap that contacts the skin immediately and thoroughly with soap and water.

Remove contaminated clothing taking care to avoid the sap, flush the skin with running water.

If sap enters the eyes, flush the eye with running water for 10-15 min, seek medical attention.

If inhaled, find fresh air in a safe place and call the poison hotline **13 11 26**.

If you do not know how to respond, call the **poison hotline 13 11 26** and follow their medical advice.

SAFETY ALERT RELEASE INFORMATION

Released with the authority of Anthony Wickens – Director Safety and Wellbeing.

Additional information can be obtained via the Safety and Wellbeing team on TCCS.Safety@act.gov.au or 6207 9059.