

Euphorbia - Care Guide

Growing & Caring For Euphorbia

Spurge, Wolf's milk, Milkweed

The genus euphorbia contains such a huge number of species with different likes and dislikes, different uses in the garden and very different ultimate sizes that it is impossible to write a care guide that does not make some rather sweeping generalisations. For want of somewhere to start we have created three categories for different types of Euphorbia based on their performance in the garden and nurseries here.

You should definitely wear gloves if you are pruning, lifting and dividing or taking cuttings from any euphorbia. The stems contain a milky sap which can readily cause skin irritation or worse. If you touch your face with the sap on your hands you will get a very nasty rash as our staff have discovered the hard way over the years.

The following euphorbia are rhizomatous, lower growing and spreading varieties suitable for improved soil in dappled shade in the border.

E. amygdaloides purpurea – wood spurge, upright growing with reddish-bronze foliage.



Euphorbia amygdaloides
purpurea



Euphorbia amygdaloides
purpurea



Euphorbia amygdaloides
purpurea



Euphorbia amygdaloides
purpurea



Euphorbia amygdaloides
var robbiae



Euphorbia amygdaloides
var robbiae



Euphorbia amygdaloides
var robbiae



Euphorbia amygdaloides
var robbiae and *petasites*
japonicus



Euphorbia 'Red Wing'

E. griffithii 'Fireglow' – orange-red involucres. Can be quite invasive. (Not an evergreen.)



Euphorbia griffithii
'Fireglow'



Euphorbia griffithii
'Fireglow'



Euphorbia griffithii
'Fireglow'

These varieties are smaller growing again and, perhaps, rockery plants. They prefer lighter well drained soil in full sun.

E. cyparissus, Cypress spurge, is a spreading variety growing to only about 10in. We offer two forms; 'Fen's Ruby' and 'Orange Man'.



Euphorbia cyparissias
'Fens Ruby'



Euphorbia cyparissias
'Fens Ruby'



Euphorbia myrsinites



Euphorbia polychroma



Euphorbia polychroma



Euphorbia polychroma



Euphorbia polychroma

These varieties are much taller growing species and varieties which are clump forming (rather than spreading) plants with great ornamental appeal in herbaceous borders. They prefer lighter soils in full sun apart from those with variegated foliage which prefer more shade.

E. caracas and its several forms ('Black Pearl', 'Silver Swan', 'Tasman Tiger' and *wulfeni*) grow to 3-4ft in maturity and flower from spring to summer.



Euphorbia characias
'Black Pearl'



Euphorbia characias
'Black Pearl'



Euphorbia martinii



Euphorbia 'Ascot
Rainbow'



Euphorbia palustris

These evergreen varieties grow much larger and become decent sized shrubs or more. Sun or dappled shade suits them equally well.

E. mellifera, Honey Spurge, grows extremely well up against a wall or as a freestanding plant in a shrub border. Its spring flowers are honey scented. Six feet or more in a coastal location with a similar spread.



Euphorbia mellifera



Euphorbia mellifera



Euphorbia mellifera



Euphorbia mellifera



Euphorbia stygiana



Euphorbia stygiana



Euphorbia stygiana



Euphorbia stygiana
'Santamaria'



Euphorbia x pasteurii



Euphorbia x pasteurii



Euphorbia x pasteurii

So variable are the species and varieties mentioned in this, all too brief, article that it is perhaps best to look at the pictures of the flower heads and of the plants actually growing in gardens to form a better view of the varieties most suited to your own garden.

Evergreen Pruning - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/LzqoaM50D5I?rel=0>

Dead Heading In June - Video Tip

View this video on Youtube here <https://www.youtube.com/G7OiLmrNTAo>

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