



# SPOTTED SPURGE

(*Euphorbia maculata* L.)

By STEVE BATTEN

Spotted spurge is one of 26 species of *Euphorbia* common to Florida. It can be found throughout the United States and even in southern Canada. On golf courses it is usually seen in weak turfgrass where nematode damage is present. It is so common to these areas, that it is often referred to as a nematode indicator plant.

There are several species of *Euphorbia* that are low growing prostrate forms similar in appearance to Spotted Spurge. Spotted Spurge can easily be identified from the others by its reddish spot or blotch in the center of its leaves. The slightly toothed leaves are attached opposite to each other on short petioles connected to hairy stems. Characteristic of *Euphorbia* species, the stems contain a milky latex juice that can be observed when the stem is broken.

Spotted spurge is a vigorous seed producer that germinates year around in tropical South Florida. The flowers are solitary or clustered with minute petals in the form of a cup.

The best control of spotted spurge is to cultivate a dense bermudagrass turf. Post-emergency herbicide control includes formulations of dicamba, 2, 4, -D plus dicamba, or bromoxynil. Pre-emergence control is possible with Simazine, but it is not a common type of control in Florida.

(Illustration from *TURF MANAGEMENT FOR GOLF COURSES*, Fall 1982, by James Beard, published by Burgess Publishing Co., Minneapolis, Minn., illustrated by Steve Batten)