

## Gopher Plant

Blue euphorbia, silver spurge, milkweed  
(not desert milkweed and not related to monarchs)

*Euphorbia rigida*

**Family:** Euphorbiaceae

**Plant Description:** A mounding perennial shrub. Leaf color is evergreen glaucous. Grows up to 2-feet by 3-feet wide. Its leaves are narrow and pointed, growing up to 1.5 inches long, and gray or blue-green colored.



**Bloom Description:** Blooms grow in rounded flower cluster in very late winter and spring. Chartreuse flowers change to green or tan and the stems die back after flowering.

**Cultural information/Uses/Human Interaction:** According to Pliny, Euphorbia is named for Euphorbus, physician of King Juba II of Numidia. One of the oldest documented medicinal plants. Ornamental, providing good winter color.

**Distribution/Range:** Native range is south Africa, eastern half of the Mediterranean, Europe, Turkey, Syria, the Caucasus, north of Iran, and Morocco.

**Habitat:** 0-2,500 feet is the preferred elevation. It grows in rocky slopes and scrub.

**Requirements:** Is hardy to 20 degrees. Prefers full sun to part shade. Requires water once per month, but more water in cooler temperatures will help invigorate it. Provide good drainage.

**Propagation:** Propagate through seeds or cuttings; prune old stems after flowers fade.

**Pollinator:** Insect pollinated.

**Disease/Pathology:** Poisonous. Sap can be an irritant.

**Status:** X

### Resources:

Pima County Cooperative Extension  
[www.delange.org](http://www.delange.org)  
waterhendry.blogspot



Bloom close-up