

Spurge study, virgin's bower, swallows, rhubarb, swallowtail

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By Jeff Clarke



Leafy spurge is a rhizomatous invader. This is a cause for concern when planted spurge study plots border native study plots. In an effort to keep the invader from influencing adjacent plots, the crew dug 20" trenches around all 32 spurge plots and buried a metal barrier. Spurge on the outside of the barrier will receive herbicide.



Chris Keyes from the University of Montana grew hundreds of virgin's bower clematis from seed collected on the ranch; we planted them along the orchard fence last spring. This year the vines grew outward along the ground and weeds grew up and around them. Notice the buried clematis in the red circle.





This week the crew removed the weeds that once choked the clematis and laid weed fabric to prevent them from coming back. We also tied the vines up on the fence with string. Some of the plants already touch the top of the six foot tall fence!



Last fall, an unexpected cold snap killed the needles on several conifers. Many of the trees survived and continue to boast new growth this year!



Turtles sun themselves on any log they can find.
We will add more floating “real estate” next week.



A swallowtail takes advantage of the invasive mustard blossoms.



Swallow young fill their nest boxes and sound eager to fly.



An ancient rhubarb continues to boast flowers near the old orchard in the Woodchuck.



Prickly pear cacti bloom.