

NOXIOUS WEED FACT SHEET

Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea biebersteinii*)



FAMILY: ASTERACEAE



Description:

Spotted Knapweed is a biennial or short-lived perennial with several branched, upright stems growing from a stout taproot and usually grows up to 3 feet tall.

Rosettes are formed the first year and appear in early spring as deeply lobed leaves radiating from a common point. The plant is hairy and rough with a somewhat wooly appearance.

It flowers continuously from early summer into the fall, as long as moisture and temperatures permit. Flowering stalks elongate the second year and the flowers are pink to purple and surrounded by stiff, black-tipped bracts, giving the flower head a spotted appearance. Most seeds fall within 3 to 4 feet of the parent plant and can remain viable in the soil for 7 to 10 years.

This plant was introduced from Eurasia as a contaminant of alfalfa and clover seed and is the most recognized noxious weed in Spokane County. Knapweed readily establishes itself on any disturbed soil and the early spring growth makes it competitive for soil moisture and nutrients.

Habitat:

Spotted Knapweed infests vacant lots, pastures, rangeland, roadsides, stream banks and landscaping. It releases an allelopathic substance that inhibits the growth of surrounding vegetation.

Control Methods:

Spotted Knapweed control may include a combination of control methods. The whole site needs to be considered, not just the weed. It is a very aggressive plant that can infest large areas quickly which is why it is important to keep it from going to seed. It has limited forage value for horses and livestock. An infestation of knapweed can impair the quality of wildlife habitat, impact the native plant community, increase soil erosion and decrease the quality of recreational lands and can pose wildfire hazards.



Mechanical Control — Cultivation can be effective if done repeatedly throughout the growing season. Mowing reduces seed production, but will not kill the plant; it will adjust to the level of the mower and can go to seed at only a few inches tall.

Biological Control — There are several biological controls available for Spotted Knapweed. The use of bio's on knapweed provides limited control and should only be used in areas where mechanical and/or chemical control measures are not feasible. Refer to our Biological Control of Noxious Weeds handout for additional information.

Chemical Control — Control with a selective herbicide will increase grass production, which in turn increases the suppression of knapweed. A good time to spray is in the spring, during the rosette state of growth. However, this weed can be controlled throughout the growing season, especially when used in conjunction with other control methods. Fall applications can be effective if there is adequate regrowth.



Recommended herbicides:

May, June <i>Seedling/Rosette</i>	July <i>Bolting, Bud, Bloom</i>	August, September, October <i>Flowering, Seed, Fall Regrowth</i>
2,4-D	Tordon* + 2,4-D	Tordon* + 2,4-D
WeedMaster, Range Star, Rifle D	Transline	Fall regrowth
Prescott	Milestone	2,4-D
Milestone	Roundup (spot spray only)	WeedMaster
Tordon* + 2,4-D		Milestone

* **Tordon®** is the trade name for picloram and is a restricted use herbicide.

Read and follow all label instructions when applying herbicides. Trade names have been used to simplify instructions and no endorsement or warranty is expressed or implied.

Spokane County Noxious Weed Control Board

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For additional information on Noxious Weeds and the State Weed Law, visit our website at:

www.spokanecounty.org/weedboard

