



# Whatcom Weeds

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board 322 N. Commercial St. Bellingham WA 98225  
(360) 715-7470 [www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/weeds](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/weeds)

## TEASEL

### *Dipsacus fullonum*

**THREAT:** Teasel, a native to Europe, was probably introduced to North America in the 1700s. It has escaped cultivation and become a common weed of roadsides, disturbed areas and fields. It is currently on the Washington State Noxious Weed Board's Monitor List (non-regulatory). It grows best in full sunlight and can form monocultures. The large basal leaves shade out other vegetation, leaving a large bare patch when the plant dies. This patch is often colonized by teasel seeds from the parent plant. A single plant can produce up to 2000 seeds, and up to 80% of seeds germinate. The seeds are viable in the soil for up to 2 years. Dried teasel heads are often used in flower arrangements, and are inadvertently spread in this manner.

**DESCRIPTION:** Teasel is a biennial or short-lived perennial herb, growing up to 8 feet tall. During its first season, teasel develops a deep taproot and a basal rosette of leaves. In its second year (or later, if poor conditions prevent flowering in its second year), the plant sends up a flowering stalk, dying after flowering. Rosette leaves are oval or oblong; leaves along the flowering stalk are oblong and opposite. Leaves and stems are prickly, as is the flowering head. One identifying characteristic of this plant is the midrib on the underside of the leaves, which has a row of spines along it, as shown below. The white to purple flowers are borne in a spike at the top of the flowering stems.



**MANAGEMENT OPTIONS:** Teasel can be controlled through cultural, mechanical and chemical methods. If digging, care should be used to remove as much as the root as possible. Seedfall can be controlled by cutting the flowering stems after flowering has started, but before seeds are mature. If this method is used, cut stems should be removed from the site, as cut flowers may continue to mature and produce viable seed. As with all control methods, the area should be monitored for regrowth and will require repeat control to eradicate the plants. After stems are cut, plants will usually still die at the end of the season. Contact the weed board for site-specific chemical recommendations.