

# Diffuse Knapweed

Diffuse Knapweed is a biennial or short-lived perennial plant that can live for several years as a rosette before flowering or continue to grow after producing seed to flower again the next year. It can grow to 3 feet tall from a deep taproot and upright stems have many spreading branches giving the plant a ball shaped appearance. Flowers are generally white, sometimes rose-purple or lavender.

Flowering occurs from June to September or later if moisture and mild conditions exist. While plants may regenerate from the crown, Diffuse Knapweed reproduces primarily by seed. A single flower stalk can produce 1,200 seeds that are dispersed when the plant breaks off at the base and tumbles.

The tendency to retain seed in mature flower heads and the capacity to tumble long distances gives Diffuse Knapweed the ability to invade new areas and spread rapidly.

Plant competition is a good tool that is often overlooked, it is essential to restore disturbed sites to prevent weed growth. An integrated program involving the use of herbicides, along with reseeding the site, followed by fertilization may be needed.

Overgrazing will allow for the spread of knapweed and livestock and wildlife will avoid it unless it is the only forage available. It has little forage value and infestations impair the quality of wildlife habitat.

**Control Measures:** Cultivation can be effective if done at regular intervals. Mowing reduces seed production, but will not kill the plant; the plants adjust to the level of the mower and will go to seed at only a few inches tall.

Control with a selective herbicide will increase grass production, which in turn increases the suppression of Knapweed. Recommendations include using a broadleaf, residual herbicide such as WeedMaster, Prescott, Banvel or Tordon. Another herbicide to consider is 2,4-D, this has limited soil activity so it can be used in situations where a residual would not be suitable, however, repeated applications may be necessary throughout the growing season.

The most effective time to spray knapweed is in the spring, during the rosette stage of growth, but this weed can be suppressed throughout the growing season with the use of herbicides when used in conjunction with mowing or cultivating once regrowth appears, as well as in the fall.

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For Additional Information on Noxious Weeds, their Control and the State Weed Law, Visit our Website at:

[www.spokanecounty.org/weedboard](http://www.spokanecounty.org/weedboard)

*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.*

