

# Spotted Knapweed

## ABOUT

Spotted Knapweed – *Centaurea stoebe* ssp. *micranthos*

The Colorado Noxious Weed Act has classified Spotted knapweed in the List B category. Spotted knapweed infestations spread rapidly.

A short-lived, non-creeping perennial that reproduces from seed and forms a new shoot each year from a taproot. It thrives in disturbed and overgrazed sites with dry-to-moist soils and has allelopathic properties. Spotted knapweed is often found with Diffuse knapweed, and hybrids of the two can form.

Rosette leaves in spring and fall can be 6" long and deeply lobed.

Buds are urn-shaped at the ends of branches with black spots on the bracts, without the long rigid spines of Diffuse knapweed.

Flowers are pink-to-purple and rarely white, appearing June through October.

Seeds have a tuft of persistent bristles.

Leaves of the mature plant are coarse like sandpaper, alternate,  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 1  $\frac{1}{2}$ " long, grey-green, divided.

Stems: Mature plants are 1 -3' tall, single stemmed.

Roots: Spotted knapweed has a stout taproot.



## MAINTENANCE AND CONTROL

**Mechanical:** Hand-pulling is effective, as long as seed heads are bagged and disposed. Roots should be removed to prevent plants from re-sprouting. Mowing can reduce seed production and spread but serves only to suppress the infestation.

**Biological:** Fair control can be achieved with a seedhead weevil (*Larinus minutus*) and root weevil (*Cyphocleonus achates* and *Sphenoptera jugoslavica*). Grazing is less effective than mowing.

**Cultural:** If desirable plant (grasses and forbs) competition is evident in Diffuse or Spotted knapweed stands, judicious herbicide application that does not injure desirable plants (especially grasses) may allow them to compete effectively with the weeds. Irrigation (where possible) may help stimulate grass competition in these cases. However, infested rangeland or pastures often are degraded, allowing knapweed invasion, and herbicides alone usually will not restore the land to a productive state. Seeding suitable perennial grasses, forbs, and shrubs is necessary to prevent seed reinvasion.

**Chemical:** Tordon 22K (picloram), Milestone (aminopyralid), Transline (clopyralid), Curtail (clopyralid +2,4-D), or Banvel/Vanquish/Clarity (dicamba) control Diffuse knapweed as well as Spotted knapweed.