

Deschutes County Noxious Weed Board

Spotted Knapweed

Identification and Control



Spotted Knapweed



- **Non-native / invasive plant originating from Europe, Central Asia**
- **Rapidly colonizes disturbed areas and well-managed habitats**
- **Once established, can dominate site(s), outcompete native plant communities, and lower forage production**
- **Known to be allelopathic—producing chemicals that inhibit growth of other plants**
- **One plant can produce thousands of seeds some of which can remain dormant and viable for many years**



Identification



- **Height: 2-4 ft**
- **Stout, elongated tap root**
- **Leaves are pale to grayish green and has rough surface**
- **Basal leaves up to 8 inches long, deeply lobed, arranged in a rosette**
- **Stem leaves, arranged alternately, are smaller (1 to 3 inches), less lobed and more linear in shape**
- **Flowering occurs from June to September. Pinkish purple flower heads are usually single, occur at the tips of stems. 1-10 floral stems**
- **Flower bracts tipped with dark, comb-like fringes that give the flower head a spotted appearance**



Habitat



- **Commonly found along disturbed areas such as road ditches, field margins, irrigation canals, utility lines, transformer boxes**
- **Prefers drier sites and gravel areas**
- **Can flourish in irrigated sites**
- **Also occupies vacant, unmaintained land and parking areas.**
- **Easily spreads into rangelands, meadows and other open habitats**



Manual Control



- Can be pulled before they flower, typically from May to June
- Roots that break off will re-sprout so consider digging if necessary.
- Plants in flower may form viable seeds even after they are pulled
- Carefully bag and dispose of all flowering plants later in the season when seeds are forming



Chemical Control



- **Herbicides can be an effective method to control large or established infestations of knapweed**
- **Spring is the most effective time to apply selective broadleaf herbicides although spraying can be effective into summer**
- **Readily available selective herbicides can be effective in controlling knapweed**
- **Re-treatment will be necessary to control late-germinating plants**
- **Precautions: Herbicides should only be applied at the rates and for the site conditions and/or land usage specified on the label of the product being used. Follow all label directions, the label is the law**



Cultural Control



- Seeding desirable species will prevent weed infestations
- Minimize disturbance and re-vegetate disturbed areas to avoid creating opportunities for weed seed germination
- In pastures, good grazing practices and management of grass and forage species will greatly improve control of knapweed
- Cross fencing of pastures allows regrowth of grasses, decreasing weeds and increasing forage by allowing animals to rotate between pastures



Summary of Best Management Practices



- Prevent plants from forming seeds
- Individual plants or small infestations can be pulled
- Try to minimize the amount of disturbed soil and avoid breaking off the taproot
- Apply appropriate herbicide to actively growing plants.
- If using an herbicide in a grassy area, use a selective herbicide to avoid injury to the grass
- Monitor site throughout growing season and remove any new plant



Thank you

Let's keep our community free of noxious weeds!

For more information on noxious weed identification and treatment, please visit www.deschutes.org/weeds or contact **Ed Keith, County Forester**, at Ed.Keith@deschutes.org or: (541) 322-7117

