

Plant: Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*)

Identification: Spotted knapweed is a biennial or short lived perennial with a sturdy taproot and branched stems growing up to 3 feet tall. It has white or pink flowers, with black bracts on the flower head giving it a spotted appearance. In the first year, the plant is a low-lying rosette with deeply lobed leaves and a thick taproot. In the second year, the plant bolts, producing stout, branching stems with alternate leaves having few to no lobes, and becoming progressively smaller up the stem. Each plant can produce up to 25,000 seeds, which disperse less than 10 feet from the parent plant unless ingested or attached to animals. Seeds can remain viable for more than 8 years. Spotted knapweed can also be allelopathic, releasing a chemical into the ground so only it can grow there and removing any competition. It can be found in rangeland, dry meadows, pastures, roadsides, and gravelly areas.

Defense: Mechanical control is possible with small infestations, be sure to get as much of the tap root out as possible. Follow ups to the site will be necessary to check for new growth. Selective broadleaf herbicides will usually be effective with chemicals like aminopyralid (Milestone), and picloram (Tordon 22k – a Restricted Use product). Broadleaf herbicides that are labeled for Spotted knapweed and have a residual to stop germination is recommended.

Always read and understand your pesticide label and restrictions. The label is the law.

