

Spotted Knapweed *Centaurea biebersteinii*

AKA: bushy knapweed

Description: Biennial or short-lived perennial member of the aster family that can grow to nearly five feet. Alternate leaves are mostly deeply cut with very thin lobes. The leaves closest to the flower heads are often small and entire. Twenty-five to thirty flowers are borne in terminal heads. Flowers are pink-purple with scaly bulb-shaped bases. Individual scales or bracts of the flower base have dark tips.



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Control Methods:

1: Hand-pulling

Hand pulling is effective for small infestations. Care must be taken to remove the entire root system. Knapweed can resprout from small root fragments.

2: Foliar Spray

For larger infestations a foliar spray of clopyralid (Stinger[®], Transline*, Curtai[®]1) herbicide can be effective. This chemical will kill all broad-leaved plants so care must be taken when using to limit damage to desirable native broad-leaved plants.

3: Grazing

Long-term grazing by goats or sheep has been effective for control of spotted knapweed.

4: Biological Control

Several species of insects, including flies, moths and a weevil have been used for biological control of large populations of spotted knapweed. These insects attack various parts of the plant including flowers, stem, roots and leaves leading to reduced seed production and decreased competitive ability.