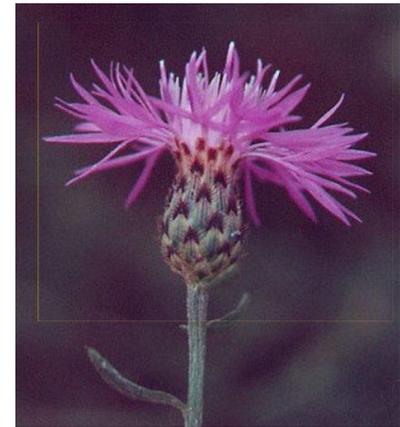


# Spotted Knapweed

(*Centaurea stoebe*)

**WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?** A winter hardy perennial with deep taproots. Mature plants may be 1 to 3 feet in height. Each flower head has stiff bracts, which are black tipped, giving the flower its “spotted” appearance. Flowers are pink to purple and appear from midsummer to fall. Knapweed is spread by seed which not only drops at the base of the plant but can be spread by animals (sticking to their fur), humans (sticking to their clothing) and vehicles (sticking in tire treads and seed heads being caught in doors and fenders).



**WHERE DOES IT GROW?** This alien weed is found in open forests, waste areas and roadside ditches. Knapweeds readily establish themselves on any disturbed soil, and their early spring emergence makes them outgrow and shade out the more desirable plants.

**WHEN DOES IT BLOOM?** Spotted Knapweed blooms from June to October and spreads entirely by seeds. Heads persist on the stiff stems through the winter. Spotted Knapweed is the most easily recognized weed in Kootenai County.

## NON-CHEMICAL CONTROL:

Control existing weeds along fence lines and roadways.

Knapweed does not thrive in well watered and fertilized areas making it one of the easiest weeds to control with out using chemicals.

If possible, digging rosettes will kill the plant.

Mow throughout the summer to keep the seed heads to a minimum.

Several insect control agents are actively working on this plant in North Idaho. Contact Nez Perce Biocontrol Center for more information on Biological Agents for Spotted Knapweed.

## CHEMICAL CONTROL:

Treat the rosettes in spring with active ingredients Aminopyralid or Clopyralid. See reverse side for more information on mechanical, cultural, biological and chemical control options. Also see our Chemical Treatments handout for more information on using herbicides.

## HOW TO IDENTIFY SPOTTED KNAPWEED

Look for it in dry areas like prairies + farm fields + roadsides



In its first year, spotted knapweed only grows gray-green, lobed leaves in a basal rosette low to the ground. It won't flower until its second year.



In its second year, knapweed grows 2-3' high with wiry, hairy, branched stems, and slender and fewer leaves near each branch's top.



Before it blooms, knapweed has an egg-shaped flowerhead with dark upside-down V-shaped markings, or bracts, which are dry and fringed.



These flowerheads bloom into thistle-like plumes of pink to purple flowers, usually starting in June, which will later become feathery seeds.



Learn more and sign up to volunteer at [fmr.org](http://fmr.org).

Illustrations by Isaac Passwater (@isaacpasswaterillustration) for FMR



Richard Old - weed-id.com

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**208-446-1290**

**[kcnoxioussweeds@kcgov.us](mailto:kcnoxioussweeds@kcgov.us) or [www.kcweeds.com](http://www.kcweeds.com)**

***Kootenai County does not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment in, its public meetings, programs, or activities. Requests for assistance or accommodations can be arranged by contacting the Noxious Weed Control Department at (208) 446-1290 or County Administration Office TTY (208)446-2145 with 3 days advance notice.***

# How to Control Spotted Knapweed

Spotted Knapweed is a perennial that reproduces by seed as well as vegetatively through roots.

**Mechanical** Digging/pulling 3-4 times per year for 5 or more years can give successful control. Care must be taken to remove the root crown and as much of the root as possible. Mowing is not effective.

**Cultural** The best long term weed control is to get your desirable native plants thriving. Killing weeds is only one step, you have to also replace them with something good. Seed and fertilize so your grass can take nutrients away from the weeds and not leave available open soil for new weeds to germinate.

**Biological** There are several biocontrol insects for Spotted Knapweed that have had some effect. Contact Nez Perce Biocontrol Center for more information (208)843-9374 or [nezpercebiocontrol.com](http://nezpercebiocontrol.com).

**Chemical** \* See our *Chemical Treatment* handout for more information on using herbicides.

- **Aminopyralid** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Milestone**, and combination products such as **Opensight** (Aminopyralid + Metsulfuron Methyl). It is broadleaf selective (safe on grasses) and has a very long residual effect. It can be effective on Spotted Knapweed when applied during the rosette to bolting stages.
- **Clopyralid** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Transline** and **Stinger**. It is broadleaf selective, safe on most conifer trees, and can be effective on Spotted Knapweed when applied in spring during the bolting stage. It is also found in combination products such as **Curtail** (Clopyralid + 2,4-D) and **Confront** (Clopyralid + Triclopyr), but be aware that the second chemical in these products may not be as safe for trees as Clopyralid alone.
- **Picloram** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Tordon 22K**. It is broadleaf selective and can be effective on Spotted Knapweed but it is federally restricted and requires a license to buy or apply.

*Chemical recommendations are based on University of Idaho Extension Bulletin 865 [Idaho's Noxious Weeds 2011 Control Guidelines Noncrop and Rangeland Sites](#), the book [Weed Control in Natural Areas in the Western United States](#) published by UC Davis Weed Research & Information Center, and herbicide labels.*