

Spotted Knapweed

Centaurea stoebe

Description: Spotted knapweed is a biennial short-lived plant that grows 2-3 feet high. It grows the first year as a rosette with leaves that are 8 inches long and 2 inches wide with deep lobes. In its second year it will grow many branched stems that each bear a single purple thistle-like flower up to 1 inch across.

Ecological Threat: Spotted knapweed especially threatens dry prairie and savanna sites. It can suppress other plants and spreads rapidly in disturbed sites. It has become a problem in pastures.

Control Methods:

Mechanical- Early detection is vital in controlling knapweed. Small populations can be controlled by pulling, but is not as effective in larger populations due to the soil disturbance caused by pulling. Mowing has limited effectiveness as the plant will just flower lower. Prescribed burning may be an effective tool.

Chemical- A selective herbicide can be applied during early bud growth in June for best results.

Biological- Seedhead weevils and root-boring weevils are commonly used.

