

Centaurea stoebe spp. *Micranthos*, Spotted Knapweed

This species is native to Europe and western Asia. The spotted knapweed can be found in several habitats, including pastures, forests, meadows or fields. This plant displaces native vegetation and reduces forage potential for wildlife. The toxicity of this plant also causes difficulties for farmers and livestock.

Description: This herbaceous plant typically grows two to three feet tall. The stems have a stiff woody texture, with alternate leaves that are up to 3.5 inches long and 1.5 inches across, sparsely distributed along the stem. The stems and the leaves appear as a whitish/greyish green, although the base of the plant may turn brown over time. Spotted knapweed is named for the bracts, which are indeed spotted.

Control: Successful control methods for Knapweed often require a few years for depletion of the entire seedbank. Small patches may be controlled by consistent pulling or digging (removing as much of the taproot as possible) and control of new seedlings/sprouts. Biological controls or herbicides can also be used to eradicate the Spotted Knapweed.

Look-alikes: Spotted Knapweed can be confused with other knapweeds such as Diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*), or Yellow Starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*).

Flower Time and Description: Spotted Knapweed blooms from June-August, lasting about 1-2 months. The upper stems hold the flower heads. Each flower head is about .75 inches wide, with several pink/purple ray florets.

