TWIST
DEFENDERS OF HABITAT

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Common teasel

Dipsacus fullonum

Common teasel rosette.

Common teasel flowerheads.

Photo credit: (c) Keir Morse, courtesy of OregonFlora

CLASSIFICATION

Common

Agricultural

Forest

ALSO KNOWN AS:

Fuller's teasel, wild teasel.

DESCRIPTION:

Teasel is a tall, taprooted species in the *Dipsacaceae* family.

LIFE CYCLE:

Biennial. New germinates sprout from early spring to late summer. The plant remains as a rosette for its first year of growth and begins growing a flowering stem its second year.

LEAF AND STEM:

Rosette leaves are oblong-shaped with wavy margins. The underside of the leaf has rigid spines along the midrib. Stem leaves are attached to one another forming a cup that holds water.

Leaves growing from the flowering stem are opposite, lance-shaped, and grow up to 12 inches (30 centimeters) long.

During the rosette stage, it develops a deep taproot, up to 2 feet (.6 meters) long. Flowering stems begin growing in May and grow up to 7 feet (2 meters) tall.

FLOWER AND SEEDS (OR FRUIT):

Tiny, individual flowers bloom in dense, cone-shaped clusters at the end of stems. It blooms from April through September.

Flowerheads are prickly, grow 1-4 inches (3-10 centimeters) long, and range in color from purple to pink. Each flowerhead has spiny bracts underneath that curve upward above the flowerhead.

Its small seeds typically have eight longitudinal midribs.

REPORT:

Common teasel is widespread in Washington County and does not need to be reported.

RATINGS

STATE OF OREGON:	STATE OF WASHINGTON:	FOUR-COUNTY CWMA (Regional):
Not Listed	Class C	Class C

Tualatin Watershed Invasive Species Team (TWIST)
invasives@TualatinSWCD.org
(503) 334-2288
Weed & Pest Directory: www.TualatinSWCD.org/weed-pest-directory/

Tualatin Soil and Water
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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LOOK-ALIKES:

Cutleaf teasel flowerheads.

Photo credit: Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org

Cutleaf teasel leaves.

Photo credit: Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org

DISTRIBUTION:

Common teasel is widespread in Washington County.

HABITAT:

Common teasel prefers sunny, open habitats but is adapted to a wide variety of soil conditions.

It favors areas with a high degree of disturbance and is often spotted along roadsides, trails, abandoned fields, creeksides, and in agricultural areas. It is flood tolerant and grows well near wetland margins.

NATIVE RANGE AND HOW IT ARRIVED HERE:

Originating from north Africa, Europe, and western Asia, common teasel was first introduced to North America in the 1700s. It was originally planted as an ornamental and its dried flowerheads were used to process wool.

HOW IT SPREADS:

Teasel is largely spread by human disturbance, mainly by seeds getting picked up on mowing equipment and moved to new sites.

Seeds also spread along waterways by floating downstream or by hitching a ride in contaminated soil, on clothes and animal fur, or on car tires.

WHAT IT THREATENS:

Each teasel plant is capable of producing up to 34,000 seeds in its lifetime. Due to the high germination rate of seeds and its tendency to get spread, infestations tend to explode in meadows, pastures, and agricultural settings if they are left untreated.

Infestations outcompete native grass and crop species. Its vegetation is prickly and bitter, leaving little forage for livestock or native herbivores.

LOOK-ALIKES:

Cutleaf teasel (*Dipsacus laciniatus*)

Although it is not as widespread as common teasel, cutleaf teasel is another introduced species in North America and a B-listed weed in Oregon. It is similar looking to common teasel and tends to be found in the same habitats.

You can distinguish the two by cutleaf teasel's white flowers and flowerhead bracts that are shorter than common teasel.

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Common teasel

Dipsacus fullonum

Common teasel infestation.

Photo credit: Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org

HOW CAN YOU CONTROL IT:

CULTURAL:

Grazing is not a viable option since livestock generally avoid eating teasel due to the bitter taste and prickly vegetation.

In areas where teasel has been removed, re-seeding and planting with native grasses, forbs, and shrubs will increase healthy competition and prevent teasel from re-infesting the site.

MANUAL:

Although there is evidence that mowing infestations multiple times a year will prevent the plants from flowering, mowing alone does not kill the plants and may spread seeds around the site or to new areas.

Small infestations can be controlled by digging rosettes when they are young and haven't formed a deep taproot. Remove as much of the root as possible to prevent re-sprouting.

Stalks should be cut while the plant has begun to bloom, not before. Cutting the stem too early will cause the plant to re-grow multiple flowering branches.

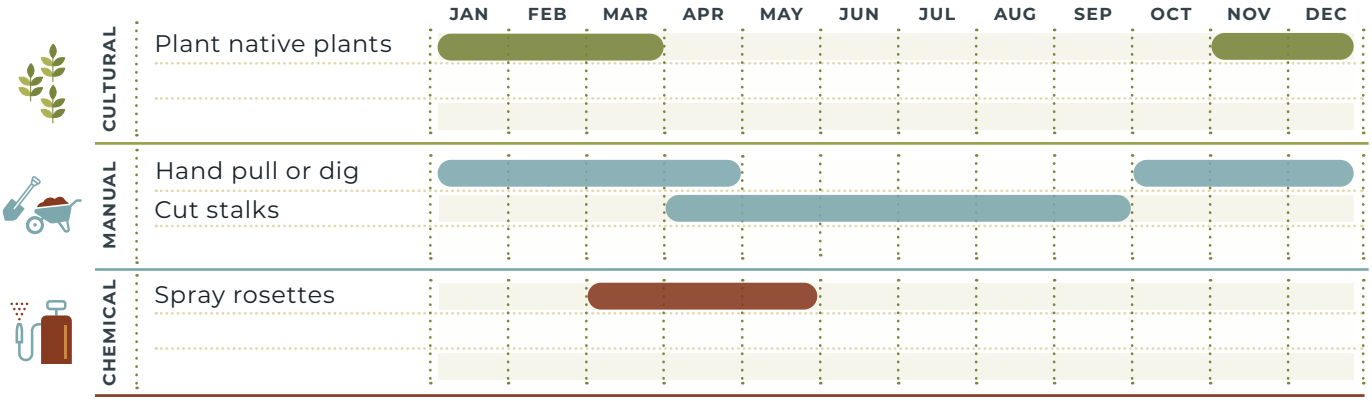
Dispose of flowerheads in a tied plastic bag and throw away in the trash - not yard debris. Monitor the area for several years and repeat if necessary.

BIOLOGICAL:

There are currently no approved biological control agents for common teasel.

CHEMICAL:

For specific herbicide information, please contact the Tualatin SWCD Invasive Species Program at invasives@tualatinswcd.org.



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