TWIST
DEFENDERS OF HABITAT

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Diffuse knapweed

Centaurea diffusa

Diffuse knapweed.

Photo Credit: (c) Bruce Newhouse, courtesy of OregonFlora

Diffuse knapweed flower.

Photo Credit: (c) Gerald D. Carr, courtesy of OregonFlora

ALSO KNOWN AS:

White knapweed, tumble knapweed, spreading knapweed.

DESCRIPTION:

Diffuse knapweed is a spreading herbaceous shrub with many branching stems. Its branching shape allows it to easily become a tumbleweed.

LIFE CYCLE:

Biennial or short-lived perennial.

LEAF AND STEM:

Rosette leaves are deeply lobed and up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) long. Mature leaves are pale green and hairy. They become smaller further up the stem.

Stems are highly branched and slightly hairy. It grows up to 3 feet (1 meter) tall.

FLOWER AND SEEDS (OR FRUIT):

Flowerheads are solitary, meaning a single flower grows at the end of a single stem. Flowers bloom midsummer through fall.

The key to identifying different knapweed species is to closely examine each species' flowers and bracts. Diffuse knapweed's flowerheads have white or purplish flowers and spiny, yellow bracts.

CLASSIFICATION

EDRR

Agricultual

REPORT:

If you think you've spotted diffuse knapweed in Washington County, please report it to the Oregon Invasive Species Hotline: OregonInvasivesHotline.org.

RATINGS

STATE OF OREGON:	STATE OF WASHINGTON:	FOUR-COUNTY CWMA (Regional):
Class B	Class B	Class B

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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DISTRIBUTION:

Diffuse knapweed is widespread in central Oregon but hasn't been reported in Washington County.

HABITAT:

Knapweeds are pioneer species that thrive in open, sunny habitats such as pastures, dry forest openings, and roadsides. Diffuse knapweed grows in places with dry soil and arid conditions.

NATIVE RANGE AND HOW IT ARRIVED HERE:

Diffuse knapweed is native to the eastern Mediterranean.

Diffuse knapweed is believed to have been introduced to North America through contaminated agricultural goods.

HOW IT SPREADS:

It spreads through seeds, which can be moved in contaminated hay or other agricultural goods. When diffuse knapweed dies back, it breaks away from the root and becomes a tumbleweed, spreading seeds wherever it roams. Cars, equipment, clothing, and animal's fur also spreads seeds.

WHAT IT THREATENS:

Knapweeds threaten agricultural production by competing with crop and forage species. They also displace native pollinator species in meadows, reducing biodiversity.

LOOK-ALIKES:

Knapweeds (*Centaurea* species)

There are many invasive knapweeds across the Pacific Northwest. Diffuse knapweed is unique with its white flowers while other species have pink to purple flowers.

LOOK-ALIKES:

Spotted knapweed.

Photo Credit: Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org

Meadow knapweed.

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Diffuse knapweed infestation.

Photo credit: Jennifer Andreas, Washington State University, Bugwood.org

HOW CAN YOU CONTROL IT:

Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) species are actively tracked throughout Washington County, and we depend on the public to help discover new infestations.

CULTURAL:

Sheep and goats will graze on all knapweed species. Generally, it is best to graze them in areas infested with knapweed when plants begin to bolt.

Reseed bare patches of pastures with competitive, perennial grasses to prevent knapweeds from growing.

MANUAL:

Gloves should be worn when pulling knapweed due to its chemical properties that may be carcinogenic.

Small patches can be dug up with a shovel or hand pulled. Knapweed is easiest to manually remove in the spring when the soil is moist and the plants are still rosettes. Make sure to remove as much of the root as possible to prevent resprouting.

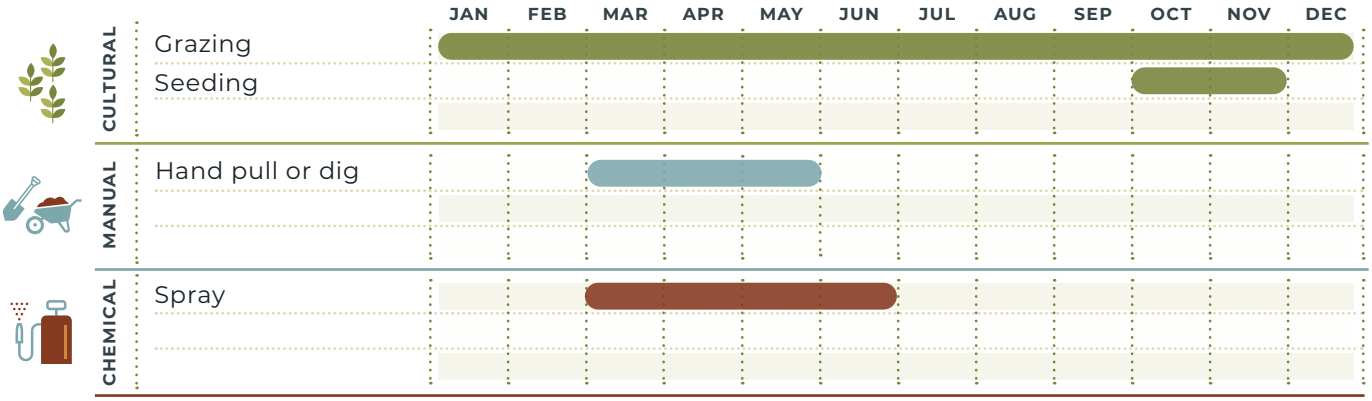
Dispose of all plant materials in a tied plastic bag and throw it away in the trash - not the yard debris.

BIOLOGICAL:

There are several bio control species for knapweeds in Oregon. Two of the most effective are: lesser knapweed flower weevil (*Larinus minutus*) and the blunt knapweed flower weevil (*Larinus obtusus*). Most biological control occurs east of the Cascades.

CHEMICAL:

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



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