



Wallowa County Weed Watch

Spotted Knapweed

Spotted Knapweed is an aggressive noxious weed!! A native of Eurasia, it was introduced as a contaminant in alfalfa seed and is now invading Wallowa County.

The Problem

Spotted Knapweed is extremely aggressive and hard to control. It can bolt and produce flowers in its first year, live up to nine years, and produce up to 40,000 seeds each year. Seeds remain viable in the soil for at least seven years. The roots produce a toxin that kills other plants severely reducing forage for wildlife (i.e. elk winter range) and livestock. It also allows more erosion than native grasses and limits water absorption into the soil. Biological control agents for diffuse knapweed are proving effective, but the agents for Spotted Knapweed only slow the plant down.

Spotted Knapweed is spreading fast in Wallowa County. Currently it can be found near Joseph, Wallowa Lake, Lostine, and in small patches countywide. It is a top priority weed in Wallowa County and Oregon and requires aggressive treatment measures.

Identification

Spotted Knapweed can be hard to tell from the more common Diffuse Knapweed. Spotted Knapweed has a deep taproot. The plant begins as a rosette of deeply notched or lobed leaves (top picture) that can be 16 inches across. A mature plant also produces a rosette at the base of the stem in the fall or early spring. The plant can have many stems and grows to four feet tall. Stems usually branch in the top half of the plant (over a foot off the ground) giving the plant a taller "airier" look than *Diffuse Knapweed*, which usually has a shorter, bushier look.

Spotted Knapweed flowers are purple, pink or white. The bud is rounded, with finely fringed, usually dark scales (giving the bud a spotted look). *Diffuse Knapweed* buds are smaller, less round and always have a spine on the end of the scale (second picture) that gives the plant a very prickly feel.

Treatment

Small patches of Spotted Knapweed can be eradicated by repeated hand pulling, but care should be taken to remove as much of the root as possible. Picloram (Tordon) and Clopyralid (Curtail, Transline) seem to provide the best long-term results. Dicamba (Banvel) and 2-4d treatments work well short-term between bolt and bud stage, but must be repeated annually.

Carefully timed grazing can control knapweed; mowing can help control seed production. Establishing healthy plant communities - with both broadleaves and grasses - is essential to long-term success.



Rosette



Spotted:
Fringed scales



Diffuse:
Spiny scales



Mature Plant

Read and follow all label instructions when applying herbicides. Trade names have been used to simplify instructions and no endorsement or warranty is expressed or implied by the Wallowa County Weed Board or this brochure.

For more information or to report weed sites call:

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