



MEADOW KNAPWEED

Centaurea x moncktonii



✦ Other names: Hybrid knapweed, White knapweed, Tumble knapweed

✦ Meadow Knapweed is a Class B Designate weed

✦ A perennial plant from the Asteraceae family, meadow knapweed reproduces by seed and is a fertile hybrid between black (*C. nigra*) and brown (*C. jacea*) knapweed.

✦ Meadow knapweed is an aggressive, invasive plant with multiple upright, reddish stems standing from 1 to 5 feet tall. Leaves are about 6 inches long and 1½ inches wide with smooth, or slightly toothed edges. Single flowers, mostly pink or purple, but sometimes white, grow at the ends of branches and are about ¾" in diameter. Knapweed flowers have distinctive bracts at the base that are papery looking and rounded, or dark and fringed, but usually with both characteristics. Seedlings are tap-rooted, mature plants develop a cluster of roots below the crown. Seeds are white to light brown and have a fringe of hairs on one end.

- ✦ Meadow Knapweed invades moist sites like irrigated pastures, moist meadows, and along rivers, streams, ditches, parks and lawns.
- ✦ Seeds are spread most often by water, or picked up and carried by vehicles. Meadow knapweed has now become a significant problem in most Western Washington counties, because it is better adapted to the growing conditions in this area than other knapweeds.
- ✦ Meadow knapweed can overtake other plants in pastures, hayfields, meadows, riparian areas, forest margins, and rights-of-way.
- ✦ Meadow knapweed infestations can result in reduced forage, wildlife habitat, and species diversity. Spotted knapweed can hybridize with Meadow knapweed if the species co-exist.

CONTROL OPTIONS

- ✦ As always, the best knapweed control is prevention. Above all else, prevent plants from going to seed.





- ★ Small plants can be pulled or dug up, especially in loose or sandy soil. Large plants with woody root crowns are more difficult to dig out. Be sure to bag up and remove all plant material to prevent the plant from re-establishing.

- ★ Spot spraying with an herbicide containing the active ingredient *glyphosate* (Roundup Pro, Glyfos, etc.) may be used effectively while the plant is actively growing, repeat as needed. For most effective treatments, apply before plants bloom and produce seed. Be aware, *glyphosate* is non-selective and will injure any plants that it comes in contact with, including grass.

- ★ For selective control of knapweed in agricultural settings (pastures, hayfields, etc.): an herbicide containing the active ingredient *aminopyralid* may be applied anytime the plant is actively growing. Applications of *aminopyralid* are also effective in the fall before a killing frost. *Aminopyralid* products will not harm grass and can be used around livestock provided all label precautions are followed.

- ★ When using herbicides, read and follow all label instructions and obey all label precautions. (Note: pesticide product registration is renewed annually and product names and formulations may vary from year to year.)

- ★ Some biocontrol agents have been shown to attack meadow knapweed and reduce the weed population somewhat, but do not control it. For information about the biological control of Meadow knapweed, see the [WSU Extension Integrated Weed Control Project](#).

