

Russian knapweed



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[*Acroptilon repens* (L.) DC.]

Russian knapweed is a long-lived, deep-rooted perennial weed with a growth cycle similar to Canada thistle. The plant emerges in midspring and grows 2 to 3 feet tall with a shrublike appearance. The leaves are narrow, alternate and lobed lower on the plant, while upper leaves are entire. Flowers appear from June through September and vary from light pink to lavender. Flower bracts are rounded with transparent tips. Once established, the plant spreads mainly by roots because seed production is much less than other knapweed plants.

Russian knapweed can spread rapidly, is very competitive, and can reduce forage production to near zero as infestations often become monocultures. Russian knapweed occurs on poorly drained soils and near streams and rivers. Russian knapweed is found statewide and has been increasing in acreage. This is the only knapweed in the state that can cause significant losses in cropland.

