

Spotted knapweed



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[*Centaurea stoebe* spp. *micranthos* (Gugler) Hayek]

Spotted knapweed is a perennial weed that spreads by seed alone. The plant grows 2 to 4 feet tall and is similar in appearance to diffuse knapweed, except generally more upright and less bushy.

Spotted knapweed has deeply lobed light green leaves that are rough to the touch. The plant has pink to purple but rarely white flowers that occur from mid-July through August. Spotted knapweed produces thousands of seeds per plant. The seed remain viable in the soil for five years or more.

Thus, infestations may recur a number of years after all vegetative growth has been eliminated. Spotted knapweed is distinguished from other knapweed species by the black-tipped stiff bracts beneath the flower.

Knapweeds are one of the most rapidly spreading invasive weeds in the region. Nearly 50 percent of the counties in North Dakota have infestations of spotted knapweed and total acreage has doubled in the last five years.

