



Diffuse Knapweed

(*Centaurea diffusa*)



photo: Beck & Sebastian, CSU Extension

Diffuse knapweed

General	Family: Sunflower (Asteraceae) Native to Eurasia Colorado List B - Control required
Common names	Tumble knapweed
Habitat	Herbaceous biennial to short lived perennial Dead plants break off near the ground and tumble Found in disturbed areas, overgrazed pastures and rangelands, roadsides, rights-of way, and gravel pits Prefers dry, light, porous soils. Intolerant of shade and flooding

PLANT

Vegetation	Grayish green Contains chemicals that may irritate skin; contains chemicals that may inhibit other plants Mature plants are 1-2 feet tall with numerous single flower-heads at the tips of shoots
Roots	Taproot
Flower	June - September White and sometimes light purple Small - 1/4 inch wide and 3/4 inch long Bracts are comb-like and tipped with a spine Sometimes bracts are dark tipped but can be told apart from Spotted knapweed by the long terminal spine
Seed	15,000+ seeds per plant Seed may stay dormant in soil for more than 6 years Seed spread by plants as they break off at the base and tumble
Seedling	Rosettes formed the first year and bolt early in May to June of the next year

Reproduction	Seed
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CONTROL			
BIOLOGICAL	<p><i>Agapeta zoegana</i>: root boring moth* <i>Cyphocleonus achates</i>, root weevil* <i>Larinus minutus</i>, seed-head weevil* <i>Sphenoptera jugoslavica</i>, root borer* *Not a control option in eradication zones or when site is under enforcement</p>		
CHEMICAL	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Herbicide</i>	<i>Timing</i>
	Mid-bolt through late bud stage	2,4-D + Dicamba (many) Aminopyralid (Milestone) Clopyralid (Curtail, Transline) Dicamba (Banvel) Picloram (Tordon <i>restricted use</i>)	Spring
	Rosette	2,4-D + Dicamba (many) Clopyralid (Curtail, Transline) Aminopyralid (Milestone)	Spring or Fall
CULTURAL	<p>Prevention - Maintain the health of the site Removal - Hand pulling works when populations are small and isolated. Bag and dispose of flower and seed-heads Grass competition - Promote grass growth by fertilization, irrigation, reseeding Cultivation - whenever plants are 3 to 6 inches tall</p>		
MECHANICAL	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Timing</i>
Burning	N/A	Not effective alone. Conditions usually do not support an effective fire. May promote flush of weeds that can then be treated with herbicide.	
Grazing	Prior to bud stage	Sheep, goats and cattle will eat	Early spring
Mowing	N/A	Not effective. Plants will regrow from crown and produce as many seeds as un-mown plants.	

Use all chemicals according to the manufacturer's label. No specific recommendation or endorsement is made or implied by listing the above methods or products.

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