

Impacts: Spotted knapweed infests a variety of natural habitats, including barrens, fields, forests, prairies, meadows, pastures, and rangelands. It out-competes native plant species, reduces native plant diversity, and decreases forage for livestock and wildlife. Spotted knapweed may also degrade soil and water resources, because its root system increases erosion, surface runoff, and sedimentation in nearby streams.



Suspected Means of Introduction: Spotted knapweed was introduced to North America from Eurasia as a contaminant in seed and from soil discarded by ships.

BioBullies

Spotted Knapweed

Centaurea biebersteinii



Description: Spotted knapweed is a biennial plant that can reach heights of 50 inches. The deeply lobed leaves are 8 inches long by 2 inches wide, with lobes widening towards the tip. Flowers bloom from June to October, and are typically purple to pink in color, though they can be white as well. The oval shaped flower heads can be single or borne in clusters of 2 to 3 at the branch ends and can be up to 1 inch in diameter. When closed, the flower heads are surrounded by stiff, black-tipped, green brackets with fringed ends.

Native Range:

Central Europe, east to central Russia, Caucasus, and western Siberia

Resources for Identification and Control of Spotted Knapweed

Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas – National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Weed of the Week - USDA Forest Service

Plant Profile Database - USDA

Invasive.org
University of GA, US Forest Service, USDA APHIS

PA Field Guide - Common Invasive Plants in Riparian Areas

Spotted Knapweed

Centaurea biebersteinii



Habitat: Spotted knapweed prefers well-drained, light-textured soils that receive summer rainfall, including open forests and prairie habitats. Spotted Knapweed spreads rapidly in disturbed areas, but can invade well-managed rangelands as well. In seasonally dry areas, spotted knapweed's taproot allows it to access water from deep in the soil, where other grasses cannot reach.

Biology: Spotted knapweed reproduce by seed. Most of the seeds are viable at the time of dispersal and can remain viable in

the soil for 5 to 8 years. Seeds are typically dispersed near the parent plant but can be transported further distances by people, wildlife, livestock, vehicles, crop seed, and soils.

Control Methods: Spotted knapweed can be controlled by hand pulling in small areas. You should be sure to remove the roots and may want to wear gloves. In larger infestations chemical control should be used. When using herbicides, read the label and follow all state and federal requirements.