

"B" Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant,
but may have limited distribution in some counties

Spotted knapweed
Centaurea stoebe

Other common names:

USDA symbol: CED13
ODA rating: B and T



Introduction: A European import probably introduced into North America in contaminated seed, on livestock and even ships ballast. Considered endangered in parts of Eastern Europe, the plant now dominates millions of acres of prime grasslands and forestland in the western U.S. It is a major economic issue for agriculture.

Distribution in Oregon: Occurs in 30 of the 32 counties in Oregon primarily in Central Oregon, Hood River County and Wallowa County.

Description: Spotted knapweed is a short-lived perennial growing up to 3 feet tall. Bloom time occurs midsummer to fall. It is a multi-stemmed plant topped with purple or sometimes cream colored flowers. The tips of flower head bracts are usually black, thus the name "spotted." Seeds dispersed by wind, water, animals, and people. Spotted knapweed is also well documented to exude allelopathic compounds into the soil to restrict competition.

Impacts: Spotted knapweed is one of the most dominant weed species in the western United States. Millions of acres of prime range and native habitat are infested. Oregon infestations are broadly scattered though increasing, causing economic losses to right of way maintenance, grazing and range productivity. The species forms dense stands on any open ground, excluding more desirable forage species and native plants. On heavily infested range, control costs restoration programs often exceed the income potential derived from grazing. Seed longevity creates a challenge for land managers wishing to restore land to productive uses.

Biological controls: There are 13 approved biocontrol agents available for release, 12 of which are established in Oregon.

