

Russian knapweed

Adams County
Weed Department
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Key ID Points

1. Russian knapweed can be distinguished from other knapweeds by the pointed papery tips of the floral bracts.
2. The roots are dark brown and have scale leaves.

Russian knapweed Identification and Management



Identification and Impacts

Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*) is a non-native deep-rooted perennial that spreads by seeds and aggressive, creeping, horizontal roots (rhizomes). The roots are black with a scaly appearance. Russian knapweed can grow up to 3 feet in height. The stems and leaves are covered with short, stiff hairs. The flowers are urn-shaped, pink to purple in color, and are solitary at the tips of the upper branches. Russian knapweed can be distinguished from other knapweeds by the pointed papery tips of the bracts that surround the flowers.

Russian knapweed emerges from its root system in early spring after soil temperatures remain above freezing. It produces flowers from June to August and sets seed in later summer to early fall. Russian knapweed reproduces primarily from its root system. Buds on the horizontal roots can form adventitious shoots that may grow to be independent plants. Russian knapweed can be managed with herbicides or insects, but long-term control must include planting competitive plant species to occupy bare ground once infested by the weed.

Russian knapweed is allelopathic, which means it contains a toxic substance that inhibits the growth of competing plants. This weed may also be toxic to horses resulting in serious injury or possibly death of the animal. Russian knapweed displaces native vegetation and reduces forage values on range and pasturelands. It can infest many land types, from roadsides, ditch banks, riparian zones, pastures, irrigated cropland, clearcuts, and cropland.

The most effective method of control for Russian knapweed is to prevent its establishment through proper land management. Maintain healthy pastures and rangeland and continually monitor your property for new infestations.

Russian knapweed is designated as a "B" list species on the Colorado Noxious Weed Act. It is required to be either eradicated, contained, or suppressed depending on the local infestations. For more information visit www.ag.state.co.us.

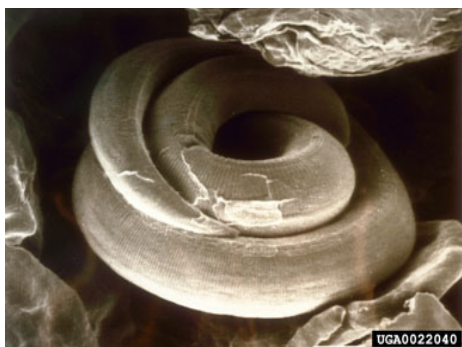
On the backside of this sheet are Russian knapweed management recommendations. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the Adams County Weed Department at 303-637-8115. Please visit our website www.adamscountyextension.org.



Acroptilon repens

**CULTURAL**

Establishment of selected grasses can be an effective cultural control of Russian knapweed. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service for seed mix recommendations. Maintain healthy pastures and prevent bare spots caused by overgrazing. Bareground is prime habitat for weed invasions.

**BIOLOGICAL**

A gall forming nematode, *Subanguina picridis*, is currently being monitored for effectiveness but is not yet available to the public. For more information, contact the Colorado Department of Agriculture, 970-464-7916.

Photo courtesy of: Ceasar, Tony. www.invasive.org

**MECHANICAL**

Mowing several times before the plants bolt stresses Russian knapweed plants and forces them to use nutrient reserves stored in the root system. Combining mowing with herbicides will further enhance control of this weed. Mow repeatedly during the summer, then apply a herbicide in the fall.

Integrated Weed Management:

The most effective control for Russian knapweed is to prevent its establishment through proper land management. The healthier the natural community, the less susceptible it will be to Russian knapweed invasion.

Areas should be monitored three times a year (spring, summer, and fall) and all Russian knapweed plants should be destroyed immediately.

Since Russian knapweed is so persistent, it is important to combine killing the plants with seeding competitive grasses.

HERBICIDES

The following are recommendations for herbicides that can be applied to range and pasturelands. Always read, understand, and follow the label directions. The herbicide label is the LAW!

Rates are approximate and based on equipment with an output of 30 gallons per acre. Please read label for exact rates.

HERBICIDE	RATE	APPLICATION TIMING
Milestone	4-6 ounces/acre	Apply in the spring and summer to plants in the bud and flowering stage and to dormant plants in the fall. Add non-ionic surfactant @ 0.32oz/gal water or 1 qt/100 gal water.
Tordon 22K *this is a Restricted Use Pesticide*	1 qt./acre or 1 oz/gal water	Apply in spring to bud/early flower stage and/or fall rosette. Add non-ionic surfactant @ 0.32oz/gal water or 1qt/100 gal water.
Telar	1-3 oz/acre or 2 grams/3 gallons of water	Apply in spring from pre-bloom to bloom and to fall rosettes. Add non-ionic surfactant @ 0.32oz/gal water or 1qt/100 gal water.

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