

Spotted Knapweed

(*Centaurea maculosa*)



Description

This member of the sunflower (*Asteraceae*) family can be easily distinguished from other knapweeds by its distinct black spots on the scales at the base of the flower. It forms dense thickets with deep taproots, and it can grow up to 4 feet tall. The leaves grow in a rosette shape straight from the root crown, and are divided into one or two oblong lobes. This species has pink or purple flowers that look similar to thistles. It blooms from June to October.

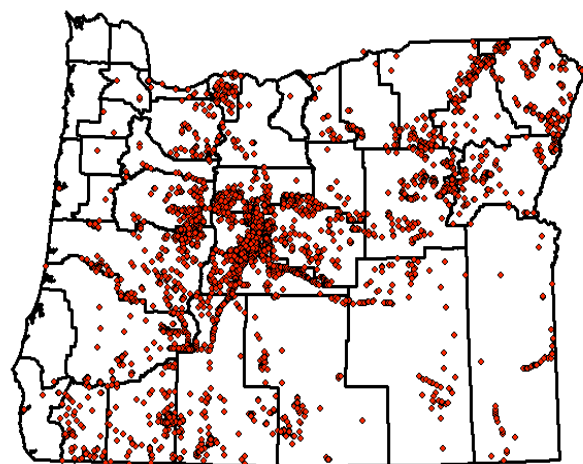
Distribution

Spotted knapweed originated in Central and Eastern Europe and was brought to the United States in alfalfa seeds in the late 1800s. Since then, it has spread across the western US. It is currently found in 33 out of 36 counties in Oregon, including Clackamas County.

Ecological/Economic Impacts

This species invades both disturbed and pristine areas and affects soil and water resources. It releases toxins from its roots, stunting or killing many native species. It spreads quickly and creates monocultures, decreasing biodiversity and reducing wildlife habitat. Areas that are heavily invaded exhibit increased runoff and decreased water retention.

Spotted knapweed creates costly problems on rangelands because most grazers cannot digest it. The Oregon Department of Agriculture estimates that this weed has cost the state \$54 million in economic losses due to control measures and loss of livestock forage.



Distribution of spotted knapweed across Oregon

Images: http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/WEEDS/profile_spottedknapweed.shtml
<http://www.weedmapper.org/>

Information: Sheley, Roger and Janet Petroff *Biology and Management of Noxious Rangeland Weeds*. Oregon State University Press. 1999.

Boesma, P. and S. Reichard and A. Van Buren *Invasive Species in the Pacific Northwest*. University of Washington Press. 2006.

ODA Plant Division, Noxious Weed Control. State of Oregon. Web. 22 June 2011.