

Diffuse knapweed



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(*Centaurea diffusa* Lam.)

Diffuse knapweed is a short-lived perennial or sometimes biennial plant that reproduces only by seed. The plant grows 1 to 2 feet tall, is multi-branched and has pale green leaves 3 to 4 inches long. The flowers are white to rose or sometimes purple. Diffuse knapweed is distinguished from spotted knapweed by the bracts which have a rigid terminal spine with four to five pairs of shorter lateral spines (crab like). The plant flowers from early July through August and produces 1,000 or more seeds.

Diffuse knapweed is native to the Mediterranean region and often is found along roadsides, railroad rights-of-way and any area where hay is transported. The plant establishes well in wet falls and spreads rapidly to reduce forage production and wildlife habitat. Diffuse knapweed has been found only occasionally in North Dakota in small patches, which were eradicated. Use gloves if you hand-pull this weed because the plant can cause skin irritations.

