Know Your Knapweeds

Knapweeds are aggressive, invasive weeds. They are listed as Prohibited Noxious weed under the Alberta *Weed Control Act*. Under this designation they must be eradicated when found in Alberta.

They are commonly found in pastures, cultivated fields, roadsides, railroads and disturbed sites. They increase costs to land stewards, consume soil nutrients, pose an increase in fire hazard and easily crowd out native vegetation. Knapweeds have little forage value, thus reducing grazing potential of pastures and rangeland, affecting both domestic livestock and wildlife.

To report sightings of any of these Knapweeds call the Alberta Pest Surveillance System 310-2777 (APSS)

PLEASE REPORT EXACT LOCATION

The best knapweed control is prevention.

Learn to identify your Knapweeds to keep an infestation from becoming established.

Bighead Knapweed (present in Alberta)

Centaurea macrocephala







HEIGHT: 50-170 cm

GROWTH HABIT: Perennial with several un-branched stems **LEAVES:** Light-green in color, leaf much longer (5-20 cm) than wide (2-10 cm), with widest point below middle, wavy/ toothed edges, hairy and pointed tips

BRACT: Thin & papery, with fringed edges

FLOWER: Yellow color and approx. 6 cm across **FOUND:** Commonly grown as ornamental, but has potential as an invader if allowed to escape

Black Knapweed

Centaurea nigra







HEIGHT: 30-150 cm

GROWTH HABIT: Perennial from woody root crown, with few stems and openly branched at middle

LEAVES: Green-gray, leaf much longer than wide, roughly hairy, leaf margins may be slightly lobed to continuous margins and will gradually become smaller towards flowers

BRACT: Covered with "comb-like", dark brown or black fringed margins up to 3x as long as the bract

FLOWER: Rose to lavender color and approx. 3 cm across **FOUND:** Roadsides, fields, clearings and waste areas

Brown Knapweed (present in Alberta)

Centaurea jacea







неіднт: 30-150 ст

GROWTH HABIT: Perennial that is openly branched near top **LEAVES:** Green-gray, leaf much longer than wide, roughly

hairy, leaf margins may be slightly lobed to continuous margins and will gradually become smaller towards flowers

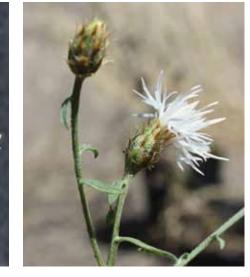
BRACT: Tips are wider than base and the thin, papery margins have a dark brown centre

FLOWER: Rose to purple and approx. 3 cm across **FOUND:** Roadsides, fields, clearings and waste areas

Diffuse Knapweed (present in Alberta)

Centaurea diffusa







HEIGHT: 20-80 cm

GROWTH HABIT: Annual or short lived perennial that is <u>very</u> branched

LEAVES: Slivery-green, lower leaves are very divided, upper leaves are narrow and elliptical

BRACT: Covered with "comb-like" spines

FLOWER: Usually white but can be rose or purple and approx. 1.5 cm across

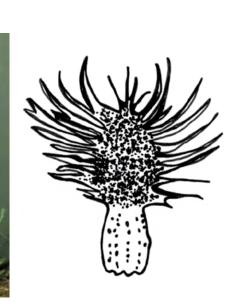
FOUND: Disturbed sites in grasslands, woodlands and open coniferous forests

Meadow Knapweed

Centaurea x moncktonii







неіднт: 30-150 cm

GROWTH HABIT: Perennial that is openly branched near top **LEAVES:** Deep-green, leaves are much longer than wide, hairy and stalkless. Basal leaves occasionally with wavy margins or lobed, taper at both ends, upper leaves are smaller and not lobed

BRACT: Fringes gold to dark brown, about the width of the bract and rounded at the tip

FLOWER: Rose to purple and approx. 2 cm across

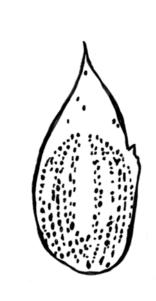
FOUND: Roadsides, riverbanks, pastures, meadows, forest openings and waste areas

Russian Knapweed (present in Alberta)

Rhaponticum repens







неіднт: 30-100 ст

GROWTH HABIT: Hardy, long lived perennial, branched stem with creeping roots

LEAVES: Slivery-green, hairy, lower leaves long and lobed, upper leaves smaller & toothed

BRACT: Pearly and papery, with no noticeable fringes or spines

FLOWER: Pink to purple and approx. 1 cm across **FOUND:** Fields, roadsides, riverbanks, ditches, clear cuts and cultivated ground

Spotted Knapweed (present in Alberta)

Centaurea stoebe ssp. micranthos







HEIGHT: 30-150 cm

GROWTH HABIT: Biennial or short lived perennial, with many stems that branch

LEAVES: Medium-green with a silvery-gray cast; deeply lobed on young plants becoming elliptical with maturity **BRACT:** Fringed tips dark & short

FLOWER: Purple, pink or sometimes white and approx. 4 cm across

FOUND: Roadsides, fields and open forests

Squarrose Knapweed

Centaurea virgata ssp. squarrosa







неіднт: 20-50 cm

GROWTH HABIT: Perennial with many stems that branch near top

LEAVES: Green and resin-gland-dotted. Lower leaves are deeply divided, upper leaves are smaller, with few lobes **BRACT:** Spine at tip of bract strongly curved backward, longer than spines at side of bract

FLOWER: Rose, purple to pink and approx. 1 cm across, fruiting heads are dropped at maturity

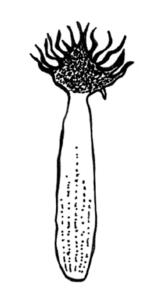
FOUND: Rangelands, pastures, open forests and roadsides

Tyrol Knapweed

Centaurea nigrescens







неіднт: 30-150 cm

CROWTH HABIT: Perennial that is openly branched near top **LEAVES:** Basal oblong leaves are much longer than wide. Lobed leaves, terminal lobe much larger than other lobes, upper leaves are smaller, with few lobes

BRACT: Bract tipped with triangular fringe, which ends abruptly, not tapering down the side of long slender green base of the bract

FLOWER COLOR: Rose to purple and approx. 3 cm across **FOUND:** Roadsides, fields and waste areas

PHOTO CREDITS: Bract images courtesy of Identification of Knapweed - Nicole Kimmel, Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development, Richard Old, XID Services, Inc., Bugwood.org

Diffuse Knapweed - Nicole Kimmel, Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development | Spotted Knapweed - Cindy Roche, Bugwood.org | Meadow Knapweed - Cindy Roche, Bugwood.org | Squarrose Knapweed - Cindy Roche, Bugwood.org | Squarrose Knapweed - Cindy Roche, Bugwood.org | Russian Knapweed - Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org

Brown Knapweed - Cindy Roche, Bugwood.org | Tyrol Knapweed - Davis, Bugwood.org

Tyrol Knapweed - Steve Dewey, Utah State University of California - Davis, Bugwood.org



