

## Russian knapweed

### *Centaurea repens*

#### Description

Introduced to North America in the early 1900's.

Toxic to horses. This species is listed as a prohibited noxious weed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

#### Habit

Perennial herb that can grow up to 3 ft (1m) tall. Tap root can reach up to 8 ft and has horizontal and vertical roots. Roots can be brown to black in color and scaly.

#### Leaves

Basal leaves are lobed and 2-4 in long while upper leaves are smaller have smooth margins. Covered with dense gray hairs.

#### Stems

Originate from a basal rosette of leaves; erect,



covered in dense gray hairs, 1-3 ft (18-36 in) tall,  
with many branches.

### **Flowers**

Pink, purple or white in color, turn straw color as they mature. Flower heads are solitary, urn-shaped and approximately 0.25 - 0.5 in in diameter; blooms from summer to fall.

### **Fruits and Seeds**

Produces 50-500 seeds per shoot which are viable for 2-3 years in soil. Fruits are ivory colored with a tuft of hair that falls off at maturity.

### **Habitat**

Native to Eurasia specifically southern Ukraine, southeast Russia, Iran and Mongolia. Found in disturbed sites, along roadsides, riverbanks, irrigation ditches, pastures, waste places, clear-cuts, and croplands.

### **Reproduction**

Primary reproduction is vegetatively and second is by seed.

### **Similar**

Brownray knapweed (*Centaurea jacea*), Meadow knapweed (*Centaurea xmoncktonii*); Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*); Common crupina (*Crupina vulgaris*).

### **Monitoring and Rapid Response**

One of the most difficult to control. Hand pull and treat with herbicides for small infestations.

Biologically controlled by the Russian knapweed gall nematode and the Russian knapweed mite.

**Credits**

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