

Black knapweed

Centaurea nigra

Description

Introduction to the United States is unknown.

Habit

Perennial knapweed, with purple flowers and black bracts growing up to 5 feet tall.

Leaves

Basal leaves have leaf stalks and are narrow with the widest point near base of leaf or in the middle. Stem leaves become smaller and narrower moving up the stem and stalkless. Margins are slightly toothed or smooth.

Stems

One to many branching stems covered in hairs. Upright and growing up to 5 feet tall.

Flowers

Flowerheads occur at branch tips. Bracts at base of flowerhead covered with dark brown or black fringed margins up to 3 times as long as bract. Flowerheads are made up primarily of 40 to 100+





purple (or sometimes white) flowers.

Fruits and Seeds

Seeds may have short blackish unequal bristles
on one end that can fall off

Habitat

Native to Europe and Russia. Found in open grasslands, prairies, open forests, orchards, cultivated fields, field edges, and travel corridors.

Reproduction

By seed and can regenerate from crown or by rhizomes.

Similar

Other species of knapweed (Centaurea).

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Hand pull plants, removing the entire tap root. Mow or cut plants before flowering to prevent seed-set. Herbicide treatments are most effective when combines with other control techniques. 3% solution of triclopyr herbicide mixed with water can be applied to leaves in early spring or fall. Gall flies (*Urophora affinis* and *Urophora quadrifasciata*) are used to feed on developing seed heads.

Credits

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