

Brownray knapweed

Centaurea jacea

Description

Often found as a hybrid of Black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*).

Habit

Perennial with a woody root crown that grows 20-48 in tall and branching near the top.

Leaves

Basal, 6 in long, tapering at both ends with the broadest part above the middle of the leaf. Stem leaves are lance-shaped, shallowly-lobed and stalkless.

Stems

Ridged and sometimes purple-striped, grows 20-48 in tall.

Flowers

Rose to purple but rarely white in color, 3/4 - 1 in light brown to dark brown flower heads are found at the ends of the branches. Hairy bracts are wider at the tips with broad, thin, papery margins.





Center of bracts is a dark brown color. Bract tips overlap the base of nearby bracts. Blooms from July to October.

Fruits and Seeds

Seeds are tan; small with fine hairs and no pappus.

Habitat

Native to Eurasia. Found in grasslands, open woods, meadows, pastures, woodland clearings, and in cutover areas of forests.

Reproduction

By seed.

Similar

Other species of Knapweeds (*Centaurea* spp.).

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Pull or dig up small infestations including the entire root system if possible. Plants that are periodically mowed will generally continue to flower and produce seed on short plants below mower blade. Effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate. Natural enemies include Gall flies (*Urophora affinis* and *Urophora quadrifasciata*) that feed on the developing seed heads and dramatically reduces seed production.

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