



# THE UPPER GREAT LAKES CENTER FOR EXOTIC SPECIES

## Quick Guide

**MichiganTech.**

### Spotted Knapweed, *Centaurea maculosa*

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## Description

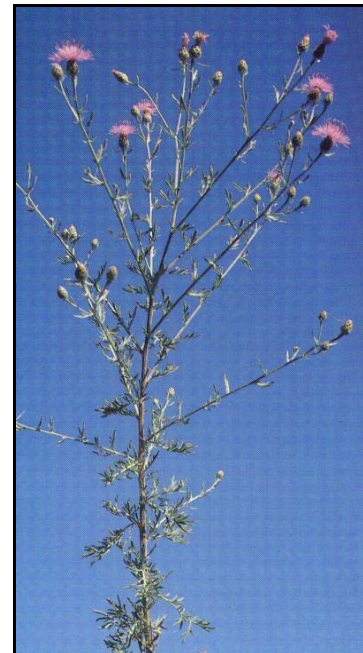
- A biennial or a short lived perennial native to Europe introduced to western North America in the 1890s.
- Leaves are pale/grayish green with fine, short hairs, lower leaves in basal rosettes deeply lobed and stem leaves less lobed, progressively smaller; slender, wiry branching stems.
- Numerous pink/pinkish-purple flowers with 5-7 feathery appendages; below the flower, many small, black-tipped bracts with short center spines.
- Seed germinate from spring to early fall and can remain viable in soil for 5 or more years.
- Fall seedlings usually over-winter as leaf rosettes; mature plants can grow to 2-4 feet high and produce hundreds of seeds.
- Can establish stands in dry or moist soils and can invade disturbed and undisturbed areas.

## Impacts

- Invades native plant communities, decreasing biodiversity by quickly taking growing space and soil nutrients - once established, large seed production can sustain population.
- Probably releases allelopathic chemicals to inhibit the germination and growth of other plants.
- Not a favored plant for wildlife or domestic grazers because of low nutrient value and reduced microbial activity within ruminants.

## Control

- Introduction of insects that feed on the seed head and roots provide some control but do not reduce stand density.
- Chemical application the most successful control but requires multiple applications. New growth will occur due to the long term viability of the seed.
- Best control is to avoid spreading this weed - drive on established roads, pull weeds without flowers and leave on site, pull weeds with flowers and place in a plastic bag for disposal, stay out of weed infested areas, and do not collect flowers.



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