

Spotted Knapweed - Invasive

Centaurea stoebe – species native to Eastern Europe but is considered an invasive species in North America.

Biennial or short-lived perennial, commonly found throughout northeast and central-north U.S.

First-year plants produce a basal rosette. Second year produces a slender, wiry stem with alternate, grayish leaves. Grows 2-3 feet tall.

Flowers bloom from July-September. Name refers to the black-tipped sepals that look like spots.

Identification

- Flowers are thistle-like, vibrant pink to purple.
- Leaves are deeply incised and irregular.
- Leaves decrease in size at top of stem.
- An app like Seek can also help identify.

Why should we try to prevent this plant from spreading?

- Has a taproot that sucks up water faster than the root systems of its neighbors.
- Rapid dispersal through high seed production.
- Low palatability, making it less likely to be eaten (is avoided by cattle and other grazing animals).
- Is poisonous to other plants (phytotoxic) and forms dense monocultures.
- Seeds can stay viable in the soil for 7 years.

Removal

- Wear gloves and long sleeves as it can irritate skin.
- Carefully pull from base of plant stem to remove entire taproot.
- Bag and dispose in garbage.

