

# Weed of The Week:

## Spotted Knapweed

(*Centaurea maculosa*)



### Weed description:

Spotted knapweed belongs to the Aster family and was introduced accidentally from Europe. This simple perennial can grow to a height of 4 feet tall and is deep green in color. Flower color can vary with the most common color being purple and sometimes white. The bud or bracts of the flower are black tipped with short, feathery appendages. This weed reproduces only by seed so consequently it produces a large amount of seed.

### Distribution:

Distribution of spotted knapweed is limited within Arapahoe County. The only known infestation is located near Cherry Creek State Park. Other parts of the country are not so lucky, specifically Montana where nearly 5 million acres are infested by this plant. Also, since it is closely related to diffuse knapweed, we can assume that it can thrive just as easily in Arapahoe County's environment.



### Why is it a problem?

Spotted knapweed is a problem to rangeland, pastures and grasslands because it decreases the amount of usable forage for grazing animals. It can also reduce land value, reduce wildlife habitat and forage, displace native plants, and decrease native plant and animal diversity. By displacing native plants and animals, dense infestations threaten natural ecosystems and nature reserves by fragmenting sensitive plant and animal habitat. This plant does have some allelopathic qualities to it, meaning that it produces a natural herbicide to suppress surrounding vegetation. This characteristic allows it to invade new areas easily and makes control very difficult.



### **If you would like more information contact:**

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