

# Stop The Invasion



Photograph courtesy of Richard Old, [www.xidservices.com](http://www.xidservices.com)

## Knapweeds

*Centaurea diffusa*,  
*Centaurea pratensis*,  
*Centaurea macrocephala*,  
*Centaurea nigrescens*,  
*Centaurea nigra*,  
*Centaurea jacea*,  
*Centaurea biebersteinii*,  
and *Centaurea calcitrapa*

Report  
Sightings

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[invasivespecies.wa.gov](http://invasivespecies.wa.gov)

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Photograph courtesy Norman E. Rees, [USDA Agricultural Research Service](http://USDA Agricultural Research Service), [Bugwood.org](http://Bugwood.org)

### What are they?

Knapweeds, such as bighead, black, brown, diffuse, meadow, spotted, and vochin knapweeds, are perennials, native to Europe. They grow very aggressively and quickly can infest an area if left unchecked.

### Are they here yet?

Yes. Knapweeds are found in various parts of Washington, depending on the species.

### Why should I care?

Knapweeds can impair wildlife habitat, decrease plant diversity, and increase soil erosion. They also can cause crop losses and reduce forage, decrease the appeal of recreational lands, and pose wildlife hazards. Diffuse knapweed has spines that can damage the mouths and digestive tracts of livestock, significantly reducing forage opportunities.

### What should I do if I find one?

Do not purchase, plant, or trade this species. Contact your county noxious weed coordinator at [http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/nwcb\\_county.htm](http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/nwcb_county.htm). Report online at [www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/report.shtml](http://www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/report.shtml).

### How can we stop them?

Limit the transport of knapweed seeds by cleaning animals, vehicles, and personal gear before moving from an infested or potentially infested area, and by using weed-free seed.

Do not collect knapweed flowers or plants as ornamentals – diffuse, brown, meadow, spotted, bighead, black, and vochin knapweeds are on Washington's Terrestrial Noxious Weed Seed and Plant Quarantine list, meaning it is prohibited to transport, buy, sell, offer for sale, or distribute these plants, plant parts, or seeds (Washington Administrative Code 16-752-610). Also, many knapweed species are listed as Class B noxious weeds, meaning that they are designated for control in certain state regions (See <http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/searchResults.asp?class=B>).



Photograph courtesy of Marisa Williams, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Bugwood.org

## What are their characteristics?

- Knapweeds grow 1-3 feet tall.
- They are yellow, white, pink, or purple.
- Knapweed flowers resemble small thistles growing at the end of clustered branches.
- For more information on how to distinguish Centaurea species, see
  - King County brochure: <http://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/water-and-land/weeds/Brochures/knapweed.pdf>
  - U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service: <http://plants.usda.gov/java/imageGallery?category=sciname&txtparm=Centaurea&familycategory=all&growthhabit=all&duration=all&origin=all&wetland=all&imagetype=all&artist=all&copyright=all&location=all&stateSelect=all&cite=all&viewsort=15&sort=sciname>.

## Where do I get more information?

### Knapweeds in general

- BugwoodWiki: <http://invasive.org/weeds/knapweed/chapter1.html>

### Bighead knapweed (*C. macrocephala*)

- King County: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/animals-and-plants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/bighead-knapweed.aspx>
- Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board: <http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/detail.asp?weed=29>

### Black knapweed (*C. nigra*)

- Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board: <http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/detail.asp?weed=30>

### Brown knapweed (*C. jacea*)

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- Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board:  
<http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/detail.asp?weed=27>

Diffuse knapweed (*C. diffusa*)

- King County: <http://kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/diffuse-knapweed.aspx>
- Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board:  
<http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/detail.asp?weed=26>

Meadow knapweed (*C. pratensis*)

- King County: <http://kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/meadow-knapweed.aspx>
- Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board:  
<http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/detail.asp?weed=28>

Spotted knapweed (*C. biebersteinii*)

- King County: <http://kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/spotted-knapweed.aspx>
- Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board:  
<http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/detail.asp?weed=33>

Vochin knapweed (*C. nigrescens*)

- King County: <http://kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/vochin-knapweed.aspx>
- Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board:  
<http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/detail.asp?weed=31>

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