

# Spotted knapweed

**ASTERACEAE** - Sunflower Family

*Centaurea maculosa* auct. non Lam. (= *Acosta m.* auct. non Holub, *C. biebersteinii* DC.)





# *Centaurea maculosa* auct. non Lam.

**Common Name:** Spotted knapweed

**Growth Form:** Forb

**Life Span:** Biennial (or short-lived perennial)

**Origin:** Eurasia

**Flowering Dates:** June-September

**Reproduction:** Seeds

**Height:** 0.3-1.2 m (1-3.9 ft)

**Inflorescence:** Heads (8-25 mm in diameter), solitary at ends of branches, terminal and axillary, numerous, in panicles and cymes; involucre pale (1-1.5 cm tall); bracts ovate, with firm points and 5-7 pairs of cilia (comb-like), tips dark; innermost bracts entire or fringed, no spine at bract tip

**Flower:** Pink to purple or rarely white disk florets; marginal florets enlarged, falsely radiate (about 1.5 cm long)

**Fruit:** Achene (2.5-3.5 mm long), notched on one side of the base, brown to black; pappus a short tuft of bristles (2-3.5 mm long); seeds 1

**Seed:** Small

**Leaves:** Alternate; basal and rosette blades narrowly elliptic to oblanceolate, usually 1-2 times pinnately parted or remotely dentate to entire; stem blades (2-4 cm long) pinnately divided into remote and narrow segments (1-3 mm wide); upper blades entire (1-2 cm long), surfaces nearly hairless to tomentose

**Stems:** Erect or ascending, 1 to several, branching above, ridged

**Underground:** Taproot, stout

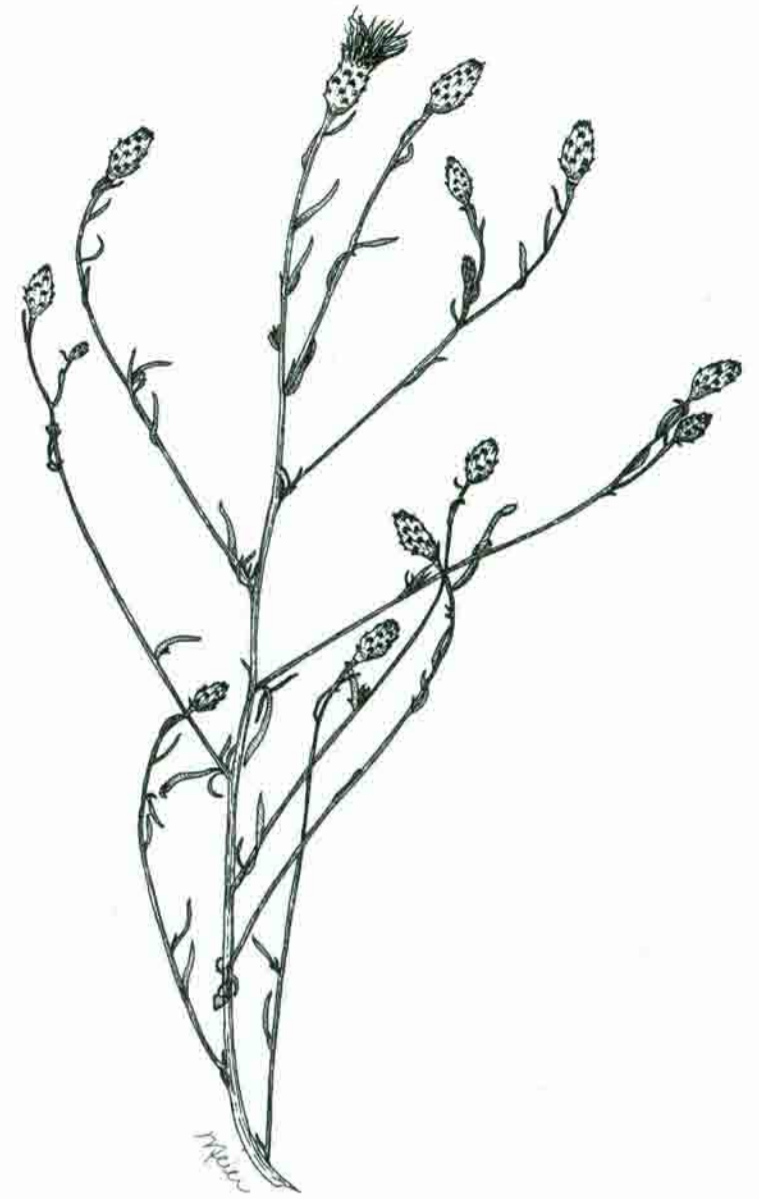
**Where Found:** Scattered throughout the Great Plains in rangeland, meadows, and roadsides, especially in sandy soils. (NE, SD, ND, KS, OK, MN, IA, MO, CO, & MB)

**Uses and Values:** Spotted knapweed has a bitter taste, but it is sometimes grazed by deer.

**Poisoning:** None

**Other:** Spotted knapweed is a noxious weed in several states.

**Similar Species:** Diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa* Lam.) is a noxious weed in several states and has white to rose or purple florets. Its involucral bracts are divided like teeth of a comb with a terminal spine (1.8-8 mm long). The bracts are usually not dark at the tip.



*Rosette leaves are narrow and usually one to two times pinnately parted. Separating spotted from diffuse knapweed at this growth stage is nearly impossible.*

*Diffuse knapweed bracts are divided like teeth of a comb and have a distinct terminal spine. Spotted knapweed lacks this distinct terminal spine.*

