

Clallam County Noxious Weed Alert

Common teasel

Dipsacus fullonum

Class C Noxious Weed, Selected Species
Control Required

Identification

- Biennial to short-lived perennial plant that dies after flowering.
- Most first year plants are a low-growing rosette (circular arrangement of leaves).
- Leaves are veined, wrinkled looking, with small stiff prickles on the top of the leaf and a midvein of larger prickles on the underside of the leaf. Leaves are in pairs along the stem.
- In the second year, teasel will grow a flowering stem, which ranges from 1 foot to over 6 feet tall. If mowed, teasel will grow shorter and can flower when just a few inches tall.
- Stems are coarse, straight with stiff prickles, and leaves are in pairs along the stem.
- Flowerheads develop at the terminal of each branch and are egg-shaped and spiny. Flowers are pale purple to dark pink and flower in two rings on the flowerhead.



Impacts

Rapidly spreading through the western United States, common teasel aggressively forms dense stands, especially in wet areas, agricultural fields and pastures. They displace native plants and reduce habitat for wildlife, reduce crop yield and are unpalatable to livestock.

Reproduction

Reproduction is by seed only, with a plant having the ability to produce over 2,000 seeds, with viability of at least 2 years.

Look-a-likes



Common cattail (*Typha latifolia*)

Both cattails and common teasel grow in wetlands. Cattails have long blade-like leaves with no prickles. The stems are smooth and their flowers and seed heads look like fluffy brown cylinders.

Common evening primrose (*Oenothera villosa*) can be mistaken for common teasel in the rosette stage. Both plants leaves look wrinkled with a main vein down the middle. Primrose leaves have no prickles on the leaves and more rounded at the edges.



Common evening primrose

Control Methods

Control often takes a couple of years, so checking infestations multiple times a year is necessary.

Teasel will release seeds for a few years, so it is essential to remove any standing dead plants.

Mechanical: Gloves should be worn at all times when removing common teasel to protect from stiff prickles. Very small infestations can be dug or hand-pulled, being sure to remove as much root as possible. Mowing will not kill the plant, but can keep it from flowering and going to seed if done multiple times throughout the growing season. When infrequently mowed, teasel will grow shorter flowering stalks, making it more likely for seeds to be picked up by the mower and spread. Dead seed heads need to be removed to stop the spread of seeds. Seeds shake out of the seed head easily, so cut teasel seed heads directly into a trash bag and dispose of in the landfill. Do not compost teasel seed heads.

Cultural: Grazing is not effective. Common teasel has low palatability at most growth stages. They also develop stiff prickles throughout the plant, making them undesirable to most animals.

Chemical: **For best control of common teasel, treat when plants emerge in the spring and are rapidly growing, but before flower buds develop.** Follow all regulations and labels when applying herbicides. Always wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when using herbicides. In some cases, such as treatment in or around water, a permit or special license is required. A systemic herbicide, which will attack both the plant's shoot and root system, is recommended. Adding a surfactant to the herbicide mix is also recommended, as it increases herbicide absorption into the plant. Do not cut or mow plants right before or within two weeks after treatment. Please refer to the herbicide label for livestock, haying and other restrictions. Chemically treated plants can become more palatable to livestock. Successful treatments will depend on the treatment location, site conditions, timing, and weather. **For more information about using herbicide to treat common teasel, please contact the Clallam County Noxious Weed Control Board.**



Standing dead teasel plants can release seeds for years and must be removed to get control over the infestation.



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