

Clallam County Noxious Weed Alert

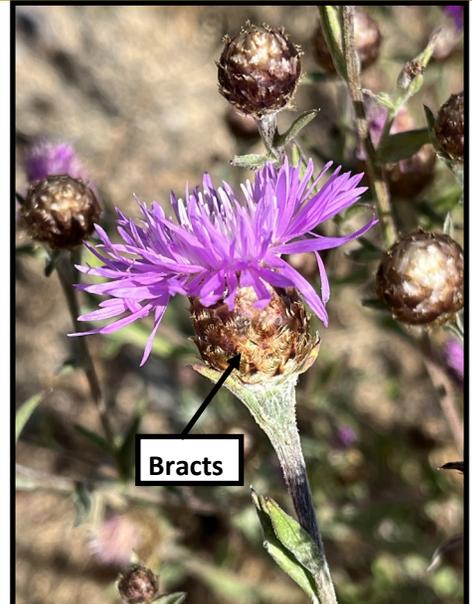
Meadow knapweed

Centaurea x moncktonii

Class B Noxious Weed
Control Required

Identification

- Perennial plant growing between 1 to 5 feet tall
- Hybrid between two other knapweed species, so meadow knapweed traits can vary greatly between plants
- Leaves can be up to 6 inches long and 1.25 inches wide, decreasing in size up the stem
- Leaves are smooth or slightly lobed
- Flowers are solitary at the terminal of each branch tip
- Flowers are light purple to white
- Scales (bracts) at the base of the flower are brown in color with papery fringed margins
- Seeds are light brown to white.



Impacts

Meadow knapweed aggressively invades pastures and meadows, out-competing desirable forage plants and native plant species. It produces an oil that deters other plants from growing.

Reproduction

Reproduces by seed and can also resprout from root crowns or root fragments.

Look-a-likes

Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*) and red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) are both non-native plants that grow in similar areas as meadow knapweed.

Spotted knapweed has deeply lobed blue-gray leaves. The flowers look very similar but the bud under the petals on spotted knapweed are narrower and more ovate than the round buds of meadow knapweed flowers. Both are required for control.



Spotted knapweed

Red clover has a bright purple-pinkish flower that can look similar to meadow knapweeds but lacks the bracts below the flower and have leaves lobed in threes.



Red clover

Control Methods

General: Plants that are removed when flowering are still able to develop viable seeds. Bag and throw away all plant parts removed. Do not compost.

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

Mechanical: Hand removal is possible with small, young infestations. Smaller plants are much easier to remove than larger, established plants. It is important to try to remove as much of the root as possible due to its ability to regrow from the root crown or root fragments. Frequent mowing may keep meadow knapweed from flowering, but will lead to flowers developing below the mow line, where mowing can then spread viable seeds to new areas.

Cultural/Biological: Promoting competitive vegetation can slow the spread of meadow knapweed. Some biological control agents have been released in our county and have helped reduce our knapweed infestations. The seed-feeding weevil, *Larinus minutus*, pictured on the right, has shown the most potential for damaging young plants and seedlings.



Biological control agent, *Larinus minutus*, resting in a knapweed flower.

Chemical: Please 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 standing 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 for 2 weeks after application to allow the plant to absorb the herbicide. Please refer to the herbicide label for livestock and hay restrictions. Chemically treated plants can become more palatable to livestock when plants begin to wilt. Successful treatments will depend on the treatment location, site specifications, timing, and weather. **For more information about herbicides or site specific use, please contact the Noxious Weed Control Board.**

***For best control of meadow knapweed, treat when plants emerge in the spring and are rapidly growing but before flower buds develop. Fall treatments of new regrowth is also suggested.**



Presented by the Clallam County Noxious Weed Control Board; revised 1/2026

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