



Weed of The Week

Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe* L.)

This week's weed of the week features a weed that producers should stay vigilant in preventing its spread, especially in pastures and hayfields. Spotted Knapweed is an invasive biennial that can also grow as a short-lived perennial. Spotted Knapweed was brought to the United States in the early 1800's from Europe and has spread throughout most of the northeast portion of the country. This weed thrives in disturbed environments such as pastures, hayfields, and roadsides. Spotted Knapweed prefers well drained soils, higher in sand or even gravelly soils. In its first year of growth spotted knapweed will produce a rosette with deeply divided numerous leaflets that are covered with fine hairs and small shiny specks or dots. The second year of growth consist of bolting a 3-4' tall stem and producing a rosy, purple flower that can easily be confused with other weed species such as Canada thistle or Ironweed. Flowering and seed production occurs mainly during the summer and early fall, producing about 400 seeds per plant. This plant can easily reproduce and consume areas of pastures with its aggressive growth style making it a very important weed to know how to identify and prevent spreading in pastures. There is no known toxicity to livestock, but livestock will not consume this weed (even goats) making even harder to manage. Spotted Knapweed also produces allelopathic chemical and releases them into the soil preventing growth of forages and other species. Preventing seed production is critical in reducing this weeds population, hand pulling rosettes in year 1 can be effective. Applications of herbicides in the fall or early spring can be very effective. 2-4-D or Clopyralid have been shown to be very effective on killing young growth.

