



MFA Crop Advantage News

Spotted Knapweed-Invasion Concerns Grow

SPOTTED KNAPWEED

Described as a tap-rooted, short-lived perennial, spotted knapweed is a member of the sunflower family. During the first year plants form low-growing rosettes that usually bolt in the second year of its life, producing anywhere from one to twenty stems. Blooming occurs in June thru July and the plants are spread by seed only. Each plant will have numerous flowers and can produce as many as 5,000 seeds per square foot, which can remain viable for 8 or more years. This weed is also allelopathic, which means it produces chemicals that inhibit other plant growth. In a few years, this invasive plant can overtake and replace pasture grass, native plants and can even choke out other noxious weeds such as sericea lespedeza. Options for reducing an infestation include: manual (digging), biological (there are 2 species of insects than can reduce infestations), long-term grazing by sheep and goats, or chemical control using Grazon Next HL, Forefront HL, or Chaparral.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR SPOTTED KNAPWEED

The first step is going to be proper identification. During the first year the plant grows as a rosette, so chances are the first time you are notified about this weed it will be as a more mature plant in its second year of life. The best control options will be products with aminopyralid (milestone), these products are **GrazonNext HL**, **ForeFront HL**, or **Chaparral**. The best application timing is always going to be when they are in the rosette stage (March/April or Sept/Oct), but by using a product containing aminopyralid you can also control Spotted Knapweed after it has bolted. **Remember to always add Astute or Astute Xtra at 0.25% v/v when using these products.**

Always read and follow label directions

SPOTTED KNAPWEED IDENTIFICATION



Mature plant



Rosette stage



Flower



Spotted Knapweed Infestation



Source: Missouri Department of Transportation

Spotted knapweed was first recorded in Missouri in 1933. This invasive plant's expansion in the last few decades caused the Missouri Legislature to designate spotted knapweed as a noxious weed during the 2008 general session.