

Weed of The Week:

Diffuse Knapweed

(*Centaurea diffusa*)



Weed description:

Diffuse knapweed belongs to the Aster family and was introduced accidentally from Europe. It is a versatile plant that can behave as a biennial or a short-lived perennial. Typically it will reach a height of 1 ½ to 2 feet tall and will be grayish-green in color. Flower color does vary with the most common color being white. However, they can also be lavender or purple. A more common identification trait is the spiny bud or bract of the flower. Knapweeds that look similar will not have this trait. This weed reproduces only by seed, consequently it is a heavy seed producer with a mature plant able to produce up to 20,000 seeds.

Distribution:

Distribution of diffuse knapweed is widespread throughout Arapahoe County. The heaviest infestations are on the western end of the County with some sporadic locations in Strasburg and south of Bennett.

Why is it a problem?

Diffuse knapweed is a problem to rangeland, pastures and grasslands because it decreases the amount of usable forage for grazing animals. It can also reduce land value, reduce wildlife habitat and forage, displace native plants, and decrease native plant and animal diversity. By displacing native plants and animals, dense infestations threaten natural ecosystems and nature reserves by fragmenting sensitive plant and animal habitat. This plant does have some allelopathic qualities to it, meaning that it produces a natural herbicide to suppress surround vegetation. This characteristic allows it to invade new areas easily and makes control very difficult.



If you would like more information contact:

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