



Fact Sheet 98-73

# WANTED— Dead, Not Alive!

This outlaw weed is hiding out! Find it. Eradicate it.

## Russian Knapweed

Alias: *Centaurea repens*

**R**ussian knapweed, like other knapweeds, is native to Eurasia. It is a perennial in Nevada and can be found in cultivated fields, orchards, pastures, roadsides, and rangelands. It prefers areas where the water table is within 20 feet of the surface. It can easily dominate cultivated fields and rangelands where its deep roots penetrate to free water. Transporting infested soils and moving contaminated equipment spreads this weed. Russian knapweed is listed as a noxious weed by Nevada Administrative Code.



*This deep-rooted perennial can easily dominate cultivated fields and rangelands.*



### Distinguishing features:

- ◆ Grows 18 inches to 3 feet tall.
- ◆ Stems are erect and multi-branched.
- ◆ Leaves are blue-green, toothed, and covered with fine hair.
- ◆ Showy pink flowers bloom from June to September. The pearly bracts at the base of the flower head are rounded with papery margins. Flowers are small, ¼ to ½ inch, cone shaped, and usually pink, but can be white to purple.
- ◆ Dense colonies can form from adventitious roots.

### Take action:

- ◆ Report its location to the land owner, gardener, manager or park ranger.
- ◆ Avoid walking on, driving on, or camping in Russian knapweed-infested areas and remove all weed seeds before moving out of an infested area.
- ◆ Dispose of the seeds, shoots, and roots in a sealed garbage bag through the trash. Herbicides may be available to kill this plant.
- ◆ Do not purchase, move, or use contaminated soil.

### Your reward:

A cleaner, healthier environment and the satisfaction that you have helped make the difference!

For more information about controlling this and other invasive weeds, contact:

Nevada Cooperative Extension  
775-784-1334;  
Nevada Division of Agriculture  
Bureau of Plant Industry,  
775-688-1180; or

Your local Weed District manager or Conservation District:

# Weed Profile: Russian Knapweed

**COMMON NAME:** Russian Knapweed

**BOTANICAL NAME:** *Acroptilon repens*

**FAMILY:** Asteraceae (Sunflower family)

**DESCRIPTION / IDENTIFICATION :** Grows 18 to 36" tall. Deeply lobed leaves are 2 to 4" long with gray pubescence. Flowers are pink, lavender, or white, and are produced from June to September. Rosettes have toothed leaves covered with fine hair.

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**NATIVE TO:** Ukraine, S.E. Russia, Iran, and Kazakh to Mongolia.

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**CURRENT DISTRIBUTION:** Found in most western states in cultivated fields, pastures, disturbed sites, roadsides, waste areas, and dry rangelands.

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**LIFE CYCLE CLASSIFICATION :** Perennial; emerges in early spring.

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**MOST COMMONLY REPRODUCES ITSELF BY:** Seed and rhizomes.

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**NUMBER OF SEEDS/ PLANT:** 50 to 500 per shoot.

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## Control Methods

**MECHANICAL:** Use mowing in combination with herbicide treatments and then tilling to overcome allelopathic effects. Continuous tillage is somewhat effective, especially when combined with an herbicide program. Hand-pull only while wearing gloves.

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**CULTURAL:** A good management program is essential. Seed competitive perennial grasses after control measures. Avoid overgrazing pastures and range. Use proper irrigation and fertilization.

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**BIOLOGICAL:** Russian knapweed gall nematode.

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**CHEMICAL:** Picloram (Tordon®, restricted use) should be applied after the first killing frost. Till the following spring to remove leaves, then treat again as needed with picloram. Control may be achieved in 2 to 4 years. Clopyralid (Stinger®; Transline®; Curtail® (includes 2,4-D)) works well during flowering, but is not yet registered for use in Nevada. Use chloresulfuron (Telar®), 2,4-D, and/or dicamba (Banvel®) with cultural practices.

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**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:** Exhibits allelopathy. Toxic to horses, with irreversible damage resulting in the inability of the horse to pick up and chew food. Does not appear to affect cattle and sheep.

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