

Russian knapweed

Acroptilon repens

Sunflower Family

Key identifying traits

- ❑ Black to brown scaly roots produce stem buds
- ❑ Cone shaped heads with light pink to purple flowers
- ❑ Bracts surrounding each flower are paper like
- ❑ Forms dense colonies from root shoots
- ❑ Stems and leaves covered with fine hair, giving a blue or gray-green color
- ❑ Stems are erect, openly branched, 18" to 36"

Biology and ecology

- Tap-rooted perennial with limited seed production
- Spreads mainly by underground rootstocks
- Flowers June through September
- Invades cultivated fields, pastures and roadsides
- Roots penetrate to a depth of over 8 feet
- Ingestion of substantial amounts can be fatal to horses
- Grazed readily and without ill effects by other livestock

Control

Prevention- Learn to identify the plant; know your property; beware of fill dirt, hay and seed from outside your area

Biological - A gall forming nematode established in Washington may eventually assist control

Cultural - Competitive vegetation helps avoid initial infestation, but Russian knapweed can invade healthy plant communities

Mechanical - Mowing, pulling and cultivation are ineffective controls because of root spread

Chemical - Several effective at label rates, but timing is critical with bud stage and after a light frost being the two best times

Where found – Scattered sites along roadsides, pastures and cultivated fields in most regions of Stevens County.

