

## Diffuse Knapweed, Tumble Knapweed

*Centaurea diffusa* Lam.

### Identification:

Normally a biennial, but may live for several years as a rosette before flowering. Bushy growth, 1-3' tall from a deep taproot. Greyish-green alternating hairy leaves. Flowers in white and rose-purple from June to September or later. Bracts on flower heads are stiff and spiny. Found along most roadsides and driveways, spreading into range and forest areas.

### Potential Damage:

Spreads like tumbleweed with the wind, attaches to clothing and animal fur or vehicles. Quickly taking over an area, it crowds out native vegetation. Can invade into relatively undisturbed areas. Invasion reduces or eliminates forage for wildlife such as deer and elk. May cause an increase in runoff resulting in damage to stream systems and fisheries. Seeds can remain viable in the seed bank for up to 10 years.

### Control and Prevention:

Take care not to drive or walk through infested areas. This is particularly important as diffuse knapweed tends to spread along the roadways. Stop and inspect vehicle between patrol units. MARK SITE on map and provide to Refuge Operations Specialist upon return from field. Plants can be pulled prior to seed set, however, gloves MUST be worn for this activity due to the carcinogenic compounds that may be in this plant. Diffuse knapweed is a Class B noxious weed in Washington state and land owners/managers are legally required to prevent the spread of this plant.

### Current Status on the Hanford Reach National Monument:

Large infestation of diffuse knapweed on Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, particularly along roadways. Biological controls (*Larinus* sp. weevils) released on Saddle Mountain. Isolated populations of this plant on ALE, especially in roadways. On ALE, pulling and spraying these plants is important to prevent spread. Isolated areas on Wahluke need to be mapped. **Please be aware and look for this plant.** Be especially cognizant not to drive through a population of diffuse knapweed and continue to drive spreading the plant into new areas. Please check vehicles regularly.

