

## **Invasive Species Factsheet-Russian Knapweed**

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**Species Common Name:** Russian Knapweed

**Species Scientific Name:** *Rhaponticum repens*

**Native Range and Introduction:** The species is native to Eurasia, and it was first introduced into the United States in the early 1900's as a contaminate in seed. It is primarily spread by contaminated seed and farm/ranch equipment, with some help from bird species.

**Description:** Perennial species that grows to three feet tall, which can reproduce by rhizomes, root stocks, or seeds. The roots of the plant have a distinct black sheath. The plant appears gray, because is it covered in short, stiff white hairs. Leaves are large at the base and become smaller as they move up the plant. Each branch has a single, purplish pink flower head. The bracts on the underside of the flower appear scaly or paper tipped.

**Ecological and Economical Threats:** The plant is a hardy invader that establishes quickly and outcompetes native vegetation. Economically can invade rangeland, hayfields, and grain fields, leading to loss of grazing capacity or yields. This species can also cause chewing disease in equine species, which can lead to death.

**Regulated Status in Wyoming:** Russian Knapweed is on the State Designated Noxious Species List and is also on the North American Invasive Species Management Association Weed Free Forage Noxious Species List that Wyoming uses for weed free forage standards.

**Distribution in Wyoming:** Russian Knapweed is present in all counties in Wyoming.

### **Control Options:**

Mechanical: Not a great option because of aggressive rhizomatous reproduction, unless it is very small patch in a sensitive area

Chemical: Primary herbicides include Milestone (Aminopyralid) or Tordon 22K (Picloram).

Cultural: Rotate an agricultural field to fallow or grass pasture, so a more effective type of management may be implemented.

Biological: Knapweed Root Weevil is a relatively new biocontrol agent that has seen great results. Also, releases of a Knapweed Parasitic Wasp species have recently taken place in Wyoming, but we are still awaiting results.

Integrated Weed Management: An example is chemical following an old alfalfa hay field with RoundUp (Glyphosate) planting it to a grass pasture that fall, then applying Milestone (Aminopyralid) to the remaining infestation.

### **Online Resources:**

URL: <http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/2946>

URL: <https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/russknapweed.shtml>

URL: <http://www.invasiveplantatlas.org/subject.html?sub=4388>

Image 1 URL: <https://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=1459265>

Image 2 URL: <https://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=5374235>



Image 1-Flowers and Bracts



Image 2-Plant in Bolting Stage

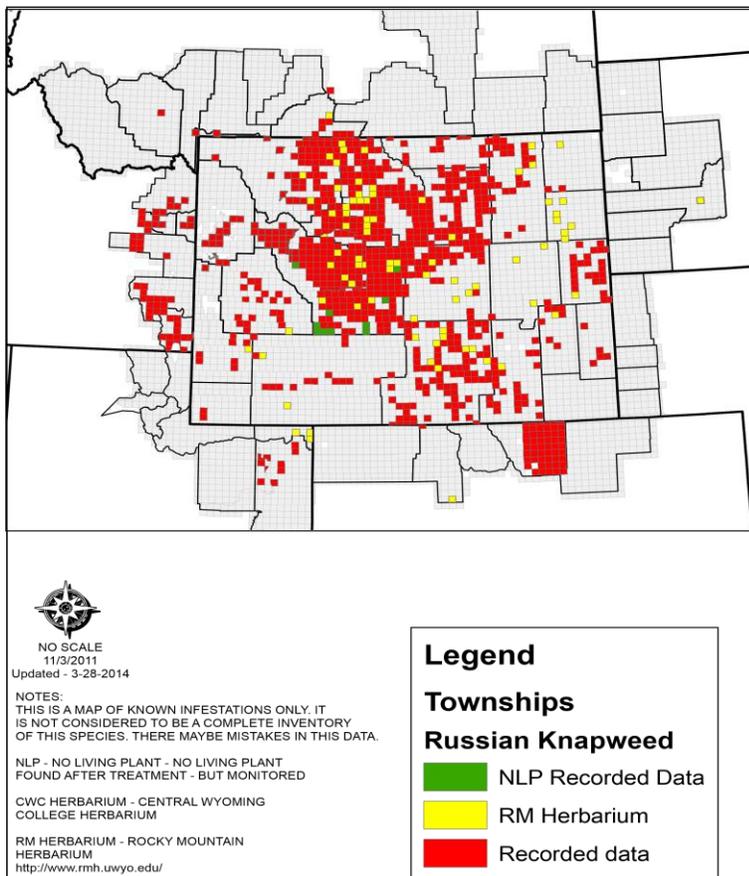


Figure 1-Russian Knapweed Distribution in Wyoming and Surrounding States  
URL: [http://wyweed.org/images/Weed\\_Maps/Russian\\_knapweed.pdf](http://wyweed.org/images/Weed_Maps/Russian_knapweed.pdf)