# Common teasel

## *Dipsacus fullonum* (L.) ssp. *sylvestris* (Huds.)

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*Knowledge to Go Places*

**Other common names**: teasel, fuller's teasel, Venus's basin, card thistle, barbers brush, brushes and combs, church broom

**Family**: Dipsacaceae (Teasel)

**USDA Code**: DIFU2

**Bayer Code (WSSA)**: DIWSI

**Life cycle classification**: Biennial or sometimes monocarpic perennial forb

**Legal Status**: Colorado Noxious Weed (general weed)

**Native to**: Europe

**Entry into Colorado**: No information available

**Current distribution in Colorado**: Common teasel is spreading rapidly in America, particularly in the Pacific Northwest. In Colorado, teasel is usually found in relatively moist, disturbed situations. It is known to be collected and spread as an ornamental decoration for dried flower arrangements (CNAP 2000).

## Biology

Seasonal development: Common teasel is a biennial or sometimes monocarpic perennial. The plant grows as a basal rosette for a minimum of one year, and then develops a tall, flowering stalk (Wisconsin DNR 1998). After flowering and seed set, the plant dies (Werner 1975). Flowering occurs from July to August (CNAP 2000).

### Reproduction

Most commonly reproduces by: Seed only

Numbers of seeds/plant: A single teasel plant can produce over 2,000 seeds, of which 30-80% may germinate (Wisconsin DNR 1998).

## Description

Roots: Shallow taproot with secondary fibrous root system (CNAP 2000)

Stems: Mature plants can grow up to six feet tall. The stem is rigid, furrowed (striate-angled), with several rows of downward turned prickles (CNAP 2000).

Leaves: Rosette leaves are conspicuously veined, with stiff prickles on the lower midrib (Whitson et al. 2000). Stem leaves are simple, opposite, net-veined, stalkless, and clasp the

stem. Flowering plants have large, oblong, opposite leaves that form cups, which are capable of holding water (Wisconsin DNR 1998).

Flowers: Purple, and subtended by spiny, awned bracts. The floral bracts at the base of the head are generally longer than the head (CNAP 2000).

Fruits & seeds: The fruits are four-angled, each contains a single seed (CNAP 2000).

## Value & Uses

Wood products: No information available

Importance to/impact on livestock & wildlife

Palatability: Common teasel is not considered palatable and is generally ignored by livestock. It displaces native vegetation and decreases range quality (CNAP 2000).

Nutritional value: No information available

Cover value: No information available

Value for rehabilitation of disturbed sites: No information available

Other uses & values: The mature heads of a cultivated variety of teasel are used for wool "fleecing" (raising the nap on woolen cloth) (Grieve 1995). No machine has yet been invented which compares with teasel in its combined rigidity and elasticity (Grieve 1995). Common teasel roots are also reported to have various medicinal values including a remedy for jaundice and a cleansing agent (Grieve 1995).

## Infestations

Habitat: Common teasel grows in open, sunny habitats that range from wet to dry. It is generally found along irrigation ditches, abandoned fields, pastures, waste places, and forests (CNAP 2000).

Impacts/Threats: Common teasel can displace native vegetation and decreases range quality. It can also be an aggressive competitor in disturbed areas. The plant's massive seed production and high seed viability rate allow it to quickly invade an area and out compete other plants (CNAP 2000).

Special Challenges to Management: No information available — research needed

## Control Methods

### Physical

Manual: Seed production may be eliminated by pulling or cutting flowering stalks (CNAP 2000).

Mechanical:

Cultivation: Mechanical removal is a difficult task. The strong, deep taproot and lateral roots must be removed for control. Plants may be cut back to the crown, but re-growth will occur. Tillage will only serve to spread infestations by severing and dragging rootstocks to new areas (Encycloweedia website).

Mowing: Seed production can be eliminated by cutting flowering stalks, however, plants may re-grow from undamaged root crown (CNAP 2000).

**Cultural:** Prevent the establishment of new infestations by minimizing disturbance and seed dispersal, eliminating seed production and maintaining healthy desired communities (CNAP 2000).

## Biological

Insects: None known

Pathogens: None known

## Chemical

Conventional:

| Trade Name (common name) | Product/Acre (Active Ingredient/Acre) | Remarks |
|---|---|---|
| Ally/Escort (metsulfuron) | 0.75 to 1.0 oz (0.45 to 0.6 oz) | Apply when in bolting growth stage |
| Vanquish/Clarity (dicamba) | 0.25-0.5 lb (¼ to ½ qt) | Apply to rosettes less than three inches in diameter |
| Vanqush/Clarity (dicamba) | 1.0 to 1.5 lb (1 to 1.5 qt) | Apply this higher rate when in bolting growth stage |

Organic: No information available - research needed

USE PESTICIDES WISELY: Always read the entire pesticide label carefully, follow all mixing and application instructions and wear all recommended personal protective gear and clothing.

NOTICE: Mention of pesticide products in this profile does not constitute endorsement of any material.

Additional comments:

Contacts:

Links:

Colorado Weed Management Association
http://www.cwma.org

Colorado Dept. of Agriculture, Division of Plant Industry
http://www.ag.state.co.us/DPI/weeds/Weed.html

Colorado Weed Management Guide
http://www.cepep.colostate.edu/WeedGuide/Weed Guide 2004.pdf

Encycloweedia
http://pi.cdfa.ca.gov/weedinfo/Index.html

References:

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Colorado Natural Areas Program. 2000. Creating an Integrated Weed Management Plan: A Handbook for Owners and Managers of Lands with Natural Values. Colorado Natural Areas Program, Colorado State Parks, Colorado Department of Natural Resources; and Division of Plant Industry, Colorado Department of Agriculture. Denver, CO. pp 210-2111.
http://parks.state.co.us/cnap/IWM_handbook/IWM_index.htm

Grieve, M. 1995. Teasel, common. A Modern Herbal. http://www.botanical.com [12 Jan 99].

USDA, NRCS. 2002. The PLANTS Database, Version 3.5 (http://plants.usda.gov). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

Werner, P.A. 1975. The biology of Canadian weeds. 12. *Dipsacus sylvestris* Huds. Canadian Journal of Plant Science 55: 783-794.

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Wisconsin DNR. 1998. Common teasel (*Dipsacus sylvestris*) and Cut-leaved teasel (*Dipsacus laciniatus*). Exotic teasels. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/invasive/factsheets/teasel.htm [26 Jan 99].