

Black knapweed

Centaurea X moncktonii

PROHIBITED MATTER: If you see this plant report it. Call the NSW DPI Biosecurity Helpline 1800 680 244

- This plant is not to be sold in all or parts of NSW



Black knapweed rosettes have oval-shaped leaves. (Photo: Jim Dellow)



Black knapweed (Photo: Bruce Auld)



Black knapweed (Photo: J. J. Dellow)



Black knapweed flower heads have thicker stems than spotted knapweed flower heads. (Photo: Jim Dellow)

Where are you likely to find it?

Black knapweed is a perennial herb that is a member of the thistle family, but unlike other thistles, has no spines on its leaves. It is not known to have infested New South

Wales, it is however, a serious crop weed in Victoria. It has been sold on several occasions in NSW as an ornamental species. Plants can produce from 1000 to 18 000 seeds which may be transported by wind, water, animals, people and vehicles. They will grow in most soil types, especially in disturbed areas, and are strong competitors, exerting an allelopathic effect on surrounding grasses and trees. Seeds germinate in autumn and overwinter as rosettes.

What does it look like?

Black knapweed is a much-branched, slender, perennial herb that grows to 1 m in height. Leaves grow alternately. It has roughly hairy, ribbed stems. The leaves of the rosettes are oval-shaped and not divided, up to 25 cm long, stalked initially, becoming smaller and stalk-less as they occur higher up the stems.

The seed heads are solitary at the ends of branches, about 15 mm in diameter with purple florets. The seed head is surrounded by several rows of dark brown to black bracts fringed with fine teeth. The stem immediately below the seed head is thickened.