

TEASEL ALERT!

Common and Cut-leaved Teasels—Two species—One BIG Problem!

DESCRIPTION

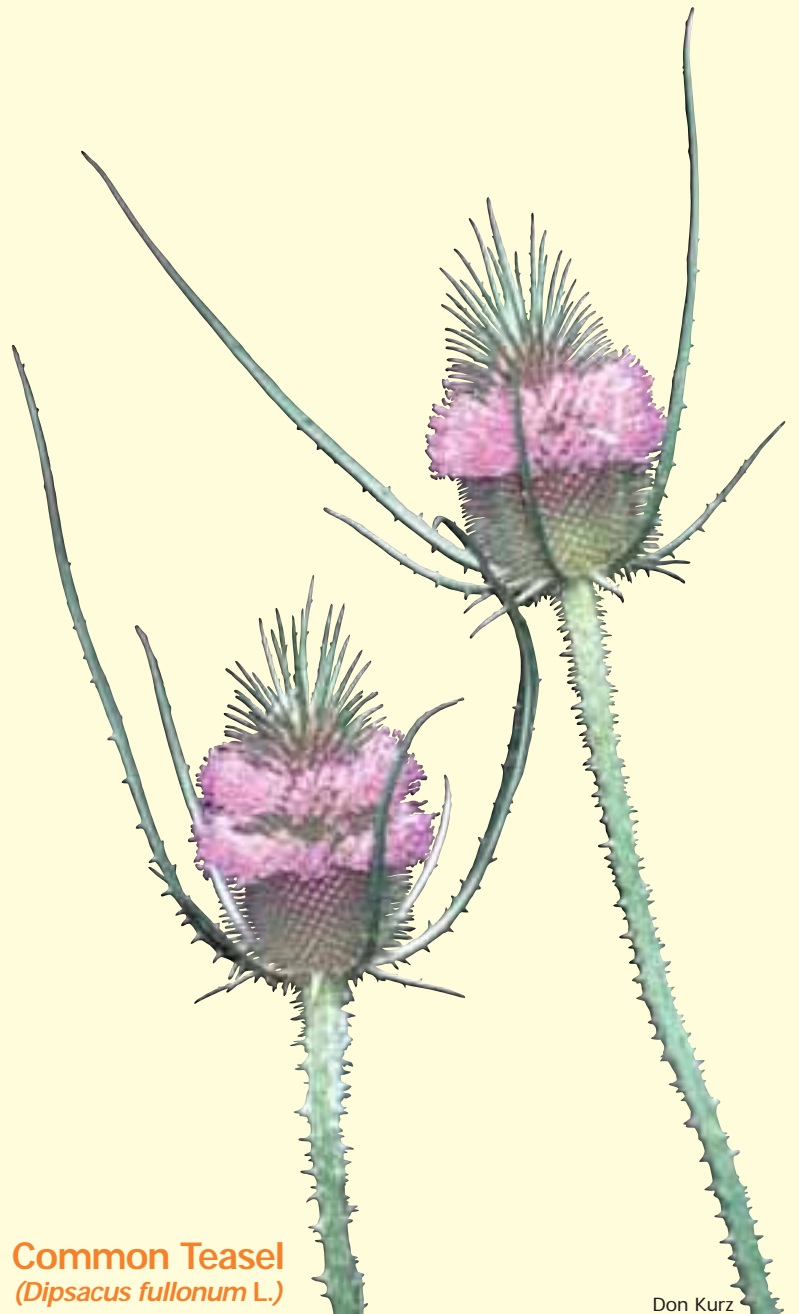
Height: Typically 5-7 feet.

Flowers: Large, oval heads, many to a plant. Bloom in distinctive “rings” around the heads. Flowers of cut leaved teasel are white; common teasel’s are lavender.

Leaves: Stem leaves are large, oblong, prickly and opposite, forming “cups” around the stem that often hold water. Leaves of cut-leaved teasel are irregularly lobed, and those of common teasel have smooth margins. Basal leaves are similar to stem leaves, forming large rosettes that stay green most of the year.

Flowering Dates: Both species can bloom from June to October.

Life History: Similar to thistles, teasel generally has a biennial life history, growing as a basal rosette of leaves for one year, and then bolting, flowering and dying in the second year.



Common Teasel
(*Dipsacus fullonum* L.)

Don Kurz



Jim Rathert

Cut-leaved Teasel
(*Dipsacus laciniatus* L.)



Tim Smith

*Watch for this
Missouri
Noxious Weed!*

See other side for more ▶

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Background

Like many of our problem weeds, teasel is an exotic plant that is native to Europe. It was introduced to North America, possibly as early as the 1700s, because the prickly stem was used in the textile industry to raise the nap of cloth. Teasel's unusual—and by some perspectives, attractive—flower heads have led to its use as a horticultural plant, in flower arrangements and in the craft trade.

Although teasel was known from local areas of Missouri by the mid-1900s, the population has skyrocketed in the last 10 years. Dispersal has been primarily along the highway system, with late-summer mowing serving to transport the already mature seeds along these rights of way. Horticultural uses have aided the plant's rapid spread, and the origin of local teasel infestations often can be traced back to a local cemetery.

Because of their potential for tremendous negative impacts to agriculture, the Missouri General Assembly designated common and cut-leaved teasel as Missouri Noxious Weeds in 2001. The law requires landowners to control the spread of and eradicate both species by methods approved by the Environmental Protection Agency and in compliance with the manufacturer's label instructions.

Why is it a problem?

Cut-leaved and common teasels are extremely aggressive plants. Although their spread can be aided by disturbance or bare ground, teasel is so aggressive that it can invade, out-compete and displace even a thick fescue stand! The plants that are displaced, whether native or introduced, typically are desirable and have values that may include livestock forage, wildlife habitat or erosion control.

CRP fields, hayfields and other unmanaged or lightly managed grasslands are prime candidates for teasel invasion. Moderate to heavy grazing seems to preclude, or at least limit, teasel invasion. It is unknown whether this is due to grazing of the basal leaves, trampling or both. Similarly, the regular disturbance of cropfields (disking, planting, herbicide application, etc.) tends to preclude teasel invasion.



Cut-leaved Teasel (*Dipsacus laciniatus L.*)

How to control it

Although mechanical methods can be used to control teasel, usually the most effective treatment is with foliar-applied herbicides. No matter the method, eliminating a teasel population is a multiple-year effort due to the need to exhaust the viable seeds that can persist in the soil for years.

A variety of herbicides have been used to control teasel. Depending upon the situation, glyphosate (Roundup, Glystar, etc.); 2,4-D; Crossbow; Garlon; Escort and others have proved effective. Glyphosates will kill any green plant, so the use of a broadleaf-specific herbicide is often preferable. Some operators have found that certain herbicides are effective only at heavier rates than those recommended for foliar applications on other species, so you may have to experiment a bit to determine a rate that will be effective.

Herbicide should be applied during the growing season, preferably before the plant bolts, to eliminate the risk of flowering and seed production. Burning or mowing prior to spraying can be used to reduce other vegetation and better expose teasel plants to the herbicide. Because teasel rosettes remain green into the fall and early winter, some operators have attempted to spray at this time to avoid killing other plant species. However, these dormant season sprayings have had mixed results.

If you would prefer not to use herbicides, mechanical methods can be used effectively to control and eliminate small populations of teasel. Young rosettes can be dug or pulled when the soil is moist, and flowering plants can be cut before seed set.

Plants should be cut at (or just below) ground level immediately before flowering to prevent later resprouting and flowering, which might produce seeds.

Even immature seed heads can develop some viable seeds; consequently, all flower heads should be removed from the site and burned or otherwise safely eliminated.



Cut-leaved Teasel (*Dipsacus laciniatus L.*)

