

If you would like weed identification, site-specific control recommendations or additional noxious weed information, contact the San Juan County Noxious Weed Control Program.



San Juan County Noxious Weed Control Program 2015

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Common Teasel Rosettes.
Photo Courtesy of Steve Dewey,
Utah State University



Stand of Teasel Flower Heads in Seed
Photo by Jason Ontjes, SJCNCWP

Common Teasel

(*Dipsacus fullonum* L.)

Class C Noxious Weed

(Selected for Control in
San Juan County)



Teasel in Flower (foreground), with
Immature Flower Heads

Photo by Jason Ontjes, SJCNCWP

Why Control Common Teasel?

Common teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) has invaded prime agricultural land and reduces quality livestock forage by forming unpalatable single-species stands. It also out-competes and replaces native vegetation. Foraging animals (sheep, cattle, goats) avoid it.

About Common Teasel:

Common teasel is a non-native biennial or short-lived perennial that reproduces by seed (achene). The first-year rosettes can be found in abundance near last year's flowering stalks. Teasel prefers moist soils in sunny, open areas but withstands a range of moisture, soil and light conditions. The wrinkled leaves of the rosette are oblong, 2" to 12" in length, and distinctly veined. The undersides are spiny along the midrib or central vein.



Typically in its second year, the rosette gives way to a spiny, flowering stalk, which can reach 1.5 to 10 feet in height. Opposite, lance-shaped leaves on the upper stalk lack stems and clasp at the base, forming a small cup which can trap water. Each plant can have one to forty flower heads, each oblong and egg-shaped. Just beneath each head are several long, leaf-like bracts that may exceed the height of the inflorescence. Lavender or pale purple flowers appear from June to October, and each plant is capable of producing over 2,000 seeds, most of which disperse within several feet of the parent plant. Seed life is up to five years.



Similar Weed Species:

The first-year rosette resembles thistle or a robust common dandelion or hairy catsear. The flowering stage may be mistaken for bull or short-styled thistle.



Teasel Rosettes & Old Flower Head.

Common Teasel Control

Tools for Teasel Removal

Before you begin:

Plan before removing weeds or disturbing the soil. Teasel seeds germinate easily on disturbed or bare soil. Determine if enough desirable vegetation is present to replace teasel. Consider a site restoration using species that are well adapted to the area and capable of out-competing teasel and other noxious weeds.

- Work Gloves
- Weed Wrench or Shovel
- Pruners and Plastic Bag, if needed
- Herbicide if appropriate

A combination of tools is often more effective than a single approach (Integrated Vegetative Management).

Mechanical: Mowing may delay flowering but will not kill teasel. Post-flower, seeds can be easily spread by mowing equipment. One can mulch over small infestations of teasel with sheet plastic or cardboard and wood chips, leaving intact for several years.

Manual/Cultural: For small infestations and when the soil is moist, dig up rosettes and pull flowering stalks, perhaps with the aid of a weed wrench. If lavender flowers are or were present, or the head appears beige or brown in color, those flower heads should be cut and bagged for disposal, since they can have seeds. A dense planting of shrubs or grasses and forbs can inhibit future teasel establishment.

Biological: There are no approved biological control agents for common teasel, though several organisms are currently under review.

Chemical: For large infestations, an herbicide may offer the best hope of quickly controlling teasel. Early spring, when few non-target plants have leafed out, is an ideal time to treat the rosettes. A broadleaf, systemic herbicide is preferred, since it will kill the roots and is less likely to affect grasses. Contact the San Juan County Noxious Weed Program for specific recommendations.

By law, herbicides must be used in strict accordance with label instructions.

What to do with the remains:

Dry and then compost the non-flowering plant. If flowering, remove and bag the flower heads, and dispose of them in the trash. The rest of the plant can be composted after it has desiccated.

Site Restoration:

Establish dense, competitive native or other non-invasive vegetation. Request weed-free seed, compost, hay and topsoil for restoration.

Follow-up:

Monitor and eradicate new populations while keeping established populations from spreading into non-infested areas. Plan on controlling teasel on a site for not less than five years.

For best pasture management practices contact the San Juan Islands Conservation District. (378-6621) or WSU Extension (378-4414).



Eagle Cove Property. Photo by Jason Ontjes