

Common Teasel

Dipsacus fullonum

This prickly biennial is a naturalized neighbor to many of us in Asotin County. It is one of our most commonly recognized weeds because its seed heads are often harvested for winter floral displays. Dried and gilded, these plants make an attractive arrangement. Various names are given to this plant, including Venus cup, gypsy comb, card's thistle, or Fuller's teasel, the dry flower heads were once used by weavers to bring up the nap of woolen cloth. Teasel also is a valuable source of nectar for bees.

Teasel grows in abandoned fields, pastures, waste areas and forests. It prefers to grow in moist but sunny locations, adapting well to just about any soil type. Its hollow stems are well armed with sharp spines. The flower petals are lilac to pink in color and are produced in a terminal spike. The lanceolate leaves can be entire or toothed and the midrib is usually spiny below. The plant is a prolific seed producer and the high germination rate allows it to out-compete many native species. Teasel is not eaten by livestock and can sometimes be a serious pest in pastures. Teasel is expanding its range in some counties in Washington. Although not on the State of Washington's weed list, this plant deserves watching.

For more information on this or other weeds, please contact the Asotin County Noxious Weed Control Board at 243-2098. Summer office hours: Mondays 7:30 – 11:30

