

Bighead knapweed

Centaurea macrocephala Puschk.

Sunflower family

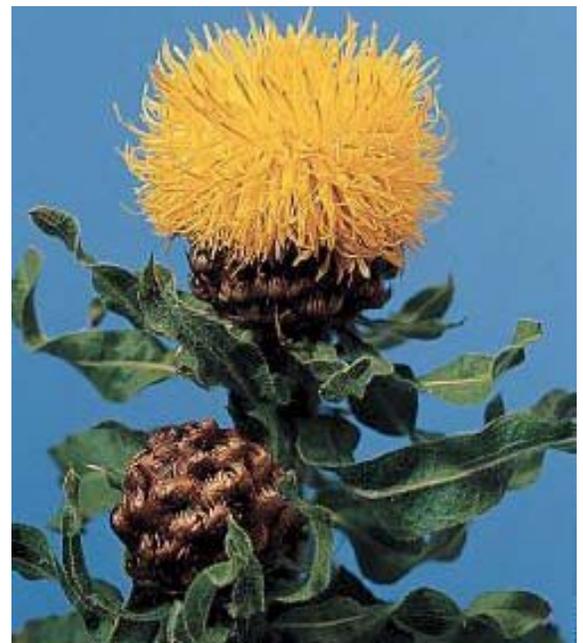
Key identifying traits

- ❑ Single, 1 to 3 inch wide, yellow flower heads on erect, unbranched, leafy stems 2 to 5 feet tall
- ❑ Broadly lance-shaped leaves have sharp pointed tips, shallowly toothed edges and rough surfaces
- ❑ Leaves change from simple stalks to winged stalks to no stalk as they become smaller up the stem
- ❑ Bracts surrounding the flower head are wider than long, mostly brown with lighter margins appearing in 8 to 12 layered rows
- ❑ Seeds are $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long with pale to brown plumes



Biology and ecology

- A perennial that reproduces by seed with up to 200 seeds per head
- Sold commercially as an ornamental under the names "Lemon fluff" or "Globe centaury"
- Found only as an escaped ornamental to date but competes vigorously in heavy grass stands in areas with loam soils and 20 inches of precipitation
- Remains green in August & palatable to livestock
- Generally only one or two stems 2 to 3 feet tall with 1 1/2 inch heads when found competing with grass but as an ornamental may be five feet tall with 3 inch heads on each of multiple stems



Control

Prevention - Learn to identify plants; know your property; beware of aggressive ornamentals

Biological - None known

Cultural - Competing vegetation helps limit spread

Mechanical - Repeated tillage, digging or cutting are all effective if properly timed to prevent seeds

Chemical - Several effective at label rates



Where found – Only occasionally reported as an intentionally planted ornamental in Stevens County but is known as an aggressive escaped ornamental in northern Pend Oreille County and in Whitman and Okanogan Counties in Washington