

Weed of the Month for July 2016

Common Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*)

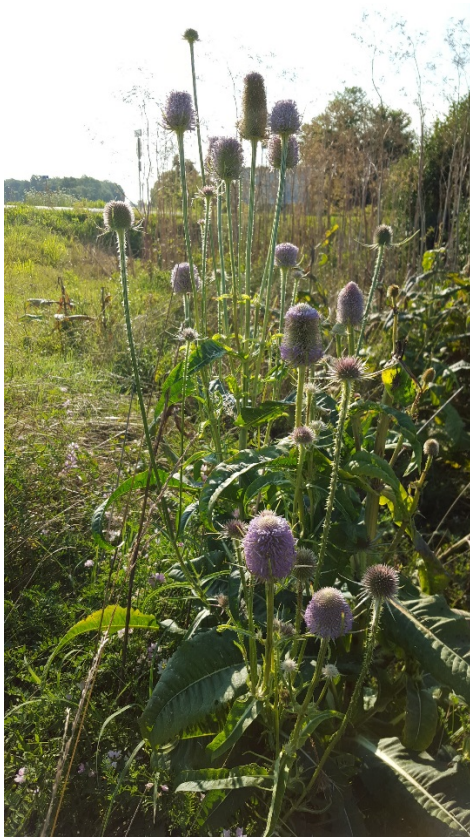
Origin: Western Russia

Interesting Fact: Also need to watch out for its relative Cut-leaf Teasel (*Dipsacus laciniatus*), which is also invasive and can be distinguished by its lobed/divided leaves.

Description: Common Teasel is a biennial/sometimes perennial herbaceous plant in the teasel family that can grow up to 6.5 ft. tall. Most parts of Common Teasel contain prickles.

Defining characteristics:

- Both stems and leaves are prickly
- Large, opposite, clasping leaves
- Purplish flowers in large flowering heads that bloom in midsummer
- Bracts (leaf-like appendages below the flowers) are long and prickly
- Big taproot (up to 2.5 ft.)



(Left image) Teasel's distinct purple flowers

(Right image) The prickly stem and clasping, opposite leaves

Habitat: Found mostly in savannas, barrens, roadsides, old fields, prairies.

A roadside infestation
of Common Teasel
along Highway 150.



Ecological threat: Each seed head of Common Teasel can produce over 1,000 seeds, and a single plant can produce up to 22,000 seeds. This allows it to form dense patches, especially after a disturbance. The prickles of Common Teasel discourage grazing, thus it can become a major problem in pasturelands.

Control Methods:

- Manual: digging up can be effective although entire root must be removed. Cutting the stalks before they go to seed but after they flower may be the most effective method, though the flower heads may need to be removed because they can sometimes still set seed after being cut. Mowing is not recommended and can actually increase the size of the patch.
- Chemical: Using glyphosate; 2,4-D; or triclopyr foliar spray, can treat plants in the rosette stage in early spring or late fall to minimize collateral damage to native plants.

References

Dickinson, Richard and France Royer. *Weeds of North America*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2014. Print.

Jacquart, Ellen. Indiana Non-Native Plant Invasiveness Ranking Form for Common Teasel. 2012. Online.