

Weed of the Week – August 15th, 2013

Dear Weed Enthusiasts,

This week's weed of interest is **Common Teasel, *Dipsacus fullonum***. It is a non-regulated Class C weed in Island County. Property owners in Island County are not required to control Class C species, but control is recommended where feasible.

Common Teasel is a biennial plant that exists as a basal rosette in the first year, and develops flower stems in the second year. Rosette leaves are lanceolate to oblanceolate and stem leaves are opposite, lanceolate and fused at the base. All leaves have short prickles on the midvein. The erect flower stems reach 6 ft. (1.8 m) in height and support spiny flower heads that are covered with small, lavender to white flowers in April to September. Seeds are small and are dispersed by the wind after the seed-head has dried. Common teasel produces a deep taproot, up to 2 feet long and an inch wide at the crown.



Dipsacus fullonum favors disturbed sites such as roadsides, ditches, waste places, riparian sites, fields and pastures in most of the continental United States. Mechanical control is very effective if done correctly. Once the flowering stalks form, wait until the flowers start to appear and then cut the plants at or right below ground level. Mowing is not as effective because plants can re-grow from the root crown if they are cut too high. If a mower is used, set it as low as possible and check back for any re-sprouting plants. Teasel plants that are knocked over by the mower or cut too high will probably be able to re-grow and set seed. Also, it is best to remove the flower heads and dispose of them because immature heads have been known to set seed if they are left on the ground.

As always, if you have more questions you can contact Janet Stein, Island County Noxious Weed Coordinator, at 678-7992, or at: janet.stein@wsu.edu.

Thanks for your interest,
Whidbey Island Conservation District