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FIELD SCABIOUS MANAGEMENT TIPS

Field scabious, a member of the Teasel family, is a perennial forb with a woody taproot that often branches. The flower is violet blue to pale purple and flower heads are solitary on each stem. Below each flower head are eight to twelve sepals and a ring of narrow green bracts. Mature plants usually grow two to four feet tall. Reproduction is only by seed. Leaves are deeply lobed into five to fifteen narrow segments, and the lower part of the plant is hairy. **A mature plant can produce up to 2,000 seeds which can remain viable in the soil for several years.** Field scabious displaces native vegetation, reducing forage for wildlife and livestock. Field scabious is very competitive with forage stands and native pastures. Once established, it is very difficult to control.



Management and control efforts should focus on reducing seed production and must be planned for many consecutive years at the existing site in order to prevent seed formation/dispersal and to monitor for, and appropriately treat, any new plants that emerge.

Effective control measures for the management of field scabious include:

- 1. Mechanical (hand pulling, digging & mowing):** Hand pulling and digging can be effective for small infestations. Remove as much of the root as possible and place flowering plants in bags to prevent seed dispersal. Return to the area for several years to monitor for and remove any new plants. Wear gloves when pulling or digging plants. Repeated mowing will help to prevent seed production.
- 2. Herbicide: Always follow directions on the label. The label is the law!** Calibrate your equipment to ensure that you are adding the proper amount of herbicide to your tank. The following herbicides are commonly used to control field scabious. **Do NOT use these herbicides in lawns, turf or ornamental settings – read the label.** *For the most effective control, apply herbicides when plants are in the rosette stage up to the bolting stage.*

Mixing rates in small backpack or hand sprayers are as follows:

*Escort XP: 1/2 – 1/3 teaspoon herbicide to 1 gallon of water.
Tordon 22K (restricted use): 1 – 1.5 oz herbicide to 1 gallon of water.

Rates in large sprayers are as follows:

*Escort XP: 1 – 2 oz herbicide per acre.
Tordon 22K (restricted use): 1 – 1.5 quarts herbicide per acre.

NOTE: Adding 2,4-D to your tank with any of the above herbicides may improve performance. Add at the rate of 1 – 2 quarts per acre for large sprayers or 1 – 2 ounces per gallon of water for backpack sprayers.

NOTE: Adding a surfactant to your tank mix may enhance the performance of your herbicide and is required for certain herbicides (read the label). Add 0.5 - 1 oz per gallon of water for backpack sprayers or 1 – 2 pints per 100 gallons for large sprayers.

*** denotes that a surfactant is required for the herbicide to be effective**

- 3. Cultural (revegetation):** Following herbicide treatment, it can be beneficial to plant desirable plant species to compete with field scabious in areas that have dense infestations.
- 4. Integrated Management:** Management of field scabious is more effective when more than one strategy is used.