

Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*)

Description

A perennial that develops a deep tap root and grows up to 1.5 m tall. Stems are erect, hairy and sparsely branched. There can be one or several stems per plant, with little or no branching in the upper stem. Leaves are hairy and the degree of the lobes is highly variable. Lower rosettes leaves tend to be lance-shaped, have pointed tips, and the margins can be entire or coarsely toothed. Stem leaves are opposite, pinnate (deeply lobed) and attached directly to the stem. Lower leaves grow to 25 cm long but become smaller higher on the plant. Flowers are a composite of small, violet-blue to purple florets clustered into a head resembling a single flower up to 4 cm wide, and occur singly at the ends of stems. Below the flower head is a ring of narrow green bracts. Once flowering is complete the seed head is domed and covered with short, bristly hairs. The fruit is nut like, cylindrical and hairy, 5-6mm in size.

Key Identifiers

- ✓ Upper leaves pinnately lobed and opposite
- ✓ Entire plant covered in short, stiff hairs
- ✓ Pink-blue flowers in dense heads

Location in Canada

Field Scabious has been reported in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Newfoundland.

Resources

<http://www.invasiveplants.ab.ca/Downloads/FS-FieldScabious.pdf>

<http://linnet.geog.ubc.ca/Atlas/Atlas.aspx?sciname=Knautia%20arvensis>

Similar species

Field Scabious is not likely to be confused with other plants. There are similar looking plants from different genus' in ornamental situations, Butterfly plant or Pincushion flower (*Scabiosa*) for example. They are not likely to be as invasive as Field Scabious.

