

Best times of the year to mechanically treat (mow) spotted knapweed (*Centaurea biebersteinii*), leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*), and tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) to prevent the spread of their seed.

	May	June	Mid-June	July	Mid-July	August	Mid-August	September	October
<i>Plant</i>									
Spotted knapweed		Bloom	Bloom	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	
Leafy spurge		Bloom	Bloom	Bloom	Bloom & Seed	Seed	Seed	Seed	
Canada thistle		Bloom	Bloom	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	
Wild parsnip		Pre-Bloom	Bloom	Bloom	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	Seed	
Tansy		Pre-Bloom	Pre-Bloom	Bloom	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	Bloom & Seed	Seed

It is crucial to start mowing in early to mid-June in order to decrease the number of flowers produced by each of the four target weed species. This will in turn decrease the number of seeds produced.

Mid-July and mid-August are important times to mow, if the plants have been mowed in mid-June. Repeated mowing can decrease the vigor and seed production of these four invasive species. If mowing was not accomplished in mid-June, mowing in mid-July and mid-August may only serve to move the seeds of the four invasive plants around the area more effectively thereby increasing the population size of the four invasive species.

Ideally, mowing the specific weed sites every two weeks from mid-June through the end of August and into September could help reduce the vigor and seed production of these invasive species better than mowing every month.

Repeated mowing over the course of the growing season and multiple years (typically 5+ years) will be needed in order to control these invasive species.

Specific mowing recommendations for each invasive species (from “Invasive plants of the upper Midwest”, E.J. Czarapata 2005)

Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea biebersteinii*) – Mowing at the start of flowering can help limit seed production. Mowing later may spread the seed.

Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) – Weekly mowing can reduce spurge seed production, but it does nothing to limit rhizome growth. Herbicide treatment of leafy spurge is more effective than mowing.

Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) – Repeated mowing or cutting can reduce an infestation within three to four years. The ideal time to cut is prior to flower buds opening because food reserves are low. Cutting should be done at least three times during the growing season (June, August, and September). Mowing after flowering will only spread the seed.

Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) – Mowing can encourage wild parsnip to send up a flowering stalk. Mowing also sets back other plant species in the area that could compete with it. If mowing is used, it should be done before seed-set and repeatedly after.

Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) – Mow prior to flowering and remove as needed to prevent seed set.