

common teasel

Dipsacus fullonum L.

Family: Dipsacaceae (teasel)

Life cycle: biennial

Habitat: roadsides, pastures, waste areas

General description: Basal leaves on the rosette are widest near tip and taper to the base, 'wrinkled', with rounded teeth. Flowering plants reach heights of 7 ft, stems are angled and covered with downward turned prickles. Leaves on bolted plants are opposite, lanceolate, up to 2 ft long with spines on underside of midrib. Flower heads are cylindrical up to 4 in long and 2 in wide. Tubular corolla is white with light purple lobes. The heads are surrounded by long spine-like bracts.

Key ID traits: Bristly stem, large lanceolate leaves with spiny midrib. The dead flowers are spiny and persist through the winter.

Similar species: Cutleaf teasel has a similar growth habit to common teasel but has lobed leaves with spines on the margins.

Fun facts: The distinctive flower heads are commonly used in dried flower arrangements. Common teasel is on the noxious weed list. In the 1950's and 60's, ISU's extension weed scientist was notorious for going to county fairs and confiscating flower arrangements that used teasel due to the presence of viable seeds in the teasel heads.



Lanceolate leaves with spiny midrib.



Common teasel rosette.