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Centaurea scabiosa

[Synonyms : *Centaurea scabiosa* var. *vertesensis*, *Colymbada scabiosa*]

GREATER KNAPWEED is a perennial. Native to Europe it has thistle-like heads of black fringed, purplish-crimson flowers.

It is also known as Black top, Blue bottle, Boltsede, Bottleweed, Bullweed, *Čekánek obecný* (Czech), *Chrupa čekánek* (Czech), Churls head, Cowede, Great knapweed, Great starthistle, *Grote centaurie* (Dutch), Hardhead, Hard irons, Horse knops, Ironhead, *Ketokaunokki* (Finnish), Logger head, Mat fellow, Matte felon, *Nevädza* (Slovak), *Pengaled Fawr* (Welsh), *Skabiosen-Flockenblume* (German), *Väddklint* (Swedish), and *Y Gramennog Fawr* (Welsh).

The flowers are pollinated by bees and flies.

Scabiosa is derived from Latin *scabies* (scab, mange, itch).

Greater knapweed gained a reputation for being able to heal whitlows which were once known as ‘felons’ hence the name Matte felon.

Medicinally, old herbalists used the roots and seeds particularly in remedies for catarrh, and ointment was applied to wounds, bruises and sores. The famed 14th Century ointment believed to have been known as *Save* (which was popular for healing wounds) included greater knapweed as an ingredient.