

Taos County

# Invasive Weed or Native Plant?

*(and why it matters)*



# Coloring Book

***Why are native plants important?***

*Native plants are well adapted to local environmental conditions, they help improve soil quality, reduce erosion, and support local wildlife. Some believe that a loss of native flora has resulted in the decline of our native pollinator species including bees and butterflies.*

***Native Plant Color Guide***

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**New Mexico Thistle – Native!**



**Blue Gramma – Native!**



**Gambel Oak – Native!**



**NM Giant Wild Hyssop – Native!**



**Common Boneset – Native!**



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### *Image Credits:*

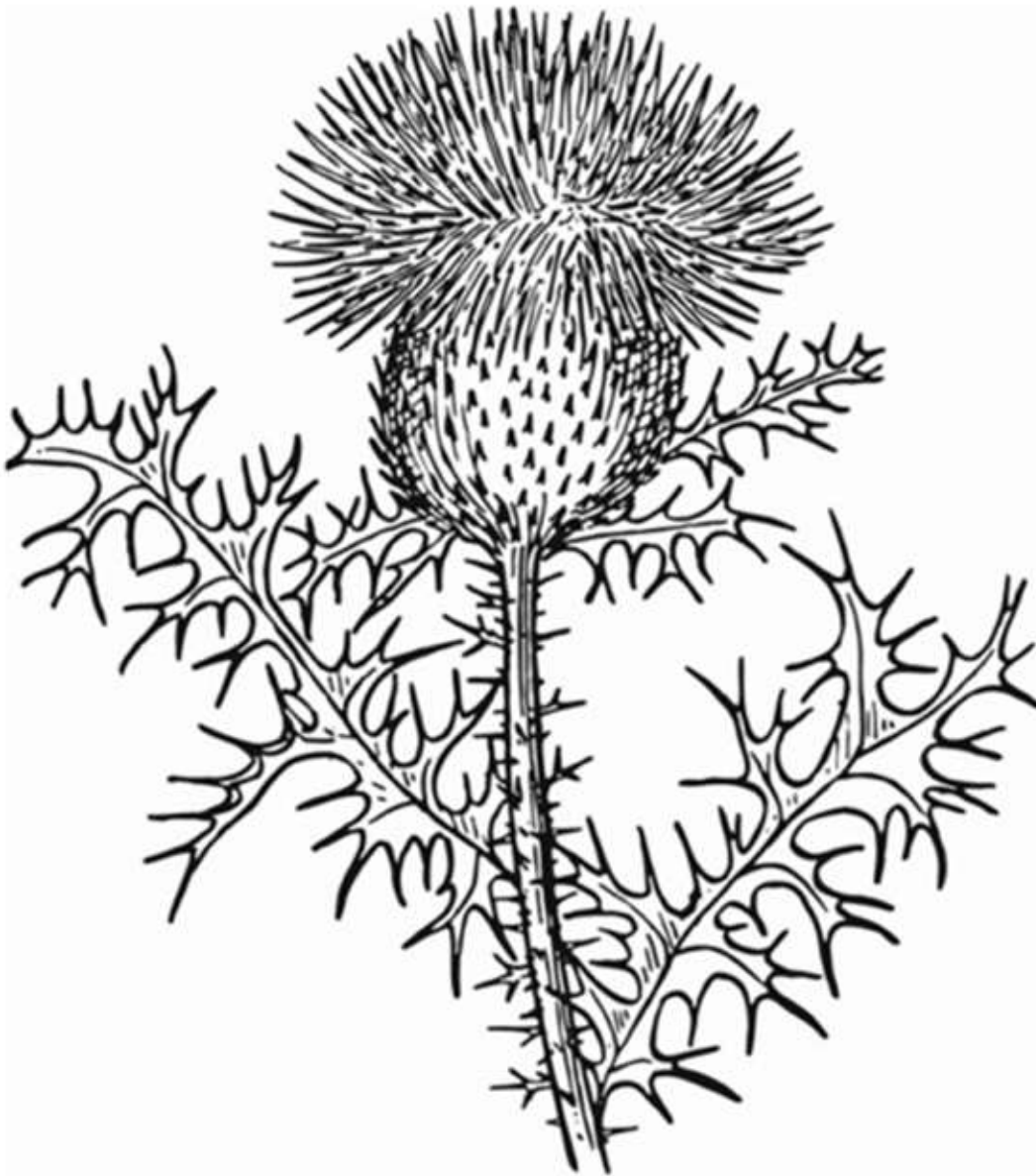
*Noxious vs. Native Color Guide:* Gerald D. Carr (Scotch thistle), Gene Sturla & [www.southwestdesertflora.com](http://www.southwestdesertflora.com) (native NM thistle), Ben Legler (Downy brome), USDA-NRCS Plants Database (Blue gramma), <https://nfs.unl.edu/woody-plants/gambel-oak> (Gambel oak), Ben Legler (Common teasel), <https://desertblooms.nmsu.edu/plantadvisor/images/wa50003.png> (NM Giant Hyssop), Gerald D. Carr (Perennial pepperweed), <https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/american-boneset-common-boneset> (Common Boneset)

*Coloring Page Image Credits:* Jeanne R. Janish (Scotch thistle) and Mike de Kievith (NM Native thistle), USDA Plants Database (Downy brome and Blue gramma), <https://forestry.usu.edu/tree-identification/key-to-trees-of-logan/russian-olive> (Russian olive) and <http://clipart-library.com/clipart/8TzKxz7boc.htm> (Gambel Oak), <http://thecommonroomblog.com/2006/09/printable-coloring-page-teasel.html> (Common teasel) and [https://etc.usf.edu/clipart/48900/48989/48989\\_hyssop\\_1g.gif](https://etc.usf.edu/clipart/48900/48989/48989_hyssop_1g.gif) (NM Giant Wild Hyssop), <https://www.cal-ipc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/LTWB-2019-FINAL.pdf> (Perennial Pepperweed) and <https://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/american-boneset-common-boneset> (Common Boneset)

*Cover photo by Gerald D. Carr*

## Scotch Thistle – Noxious!

Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*), also known as Winged thistle, Cotton thistle, Queen Mary's thistle, Woolly thistle, Jackass thistle, or Heraldic thistle, is a biennial (takes 2 years to complete its lifecycle) that infests sites where disturbance has occurred, such as ditches, pastures, grasslands, roadsides, open fields, and riparian areas. The bright purple flowers measure up to 2 inches wide and have sharp, sage-colored bracts sticking out of the sides. The leaves can measure 4 to 20 inches long! This aggressive noxious weed can easily outcompete native plants and reduces forage for native wildlife and livestock.



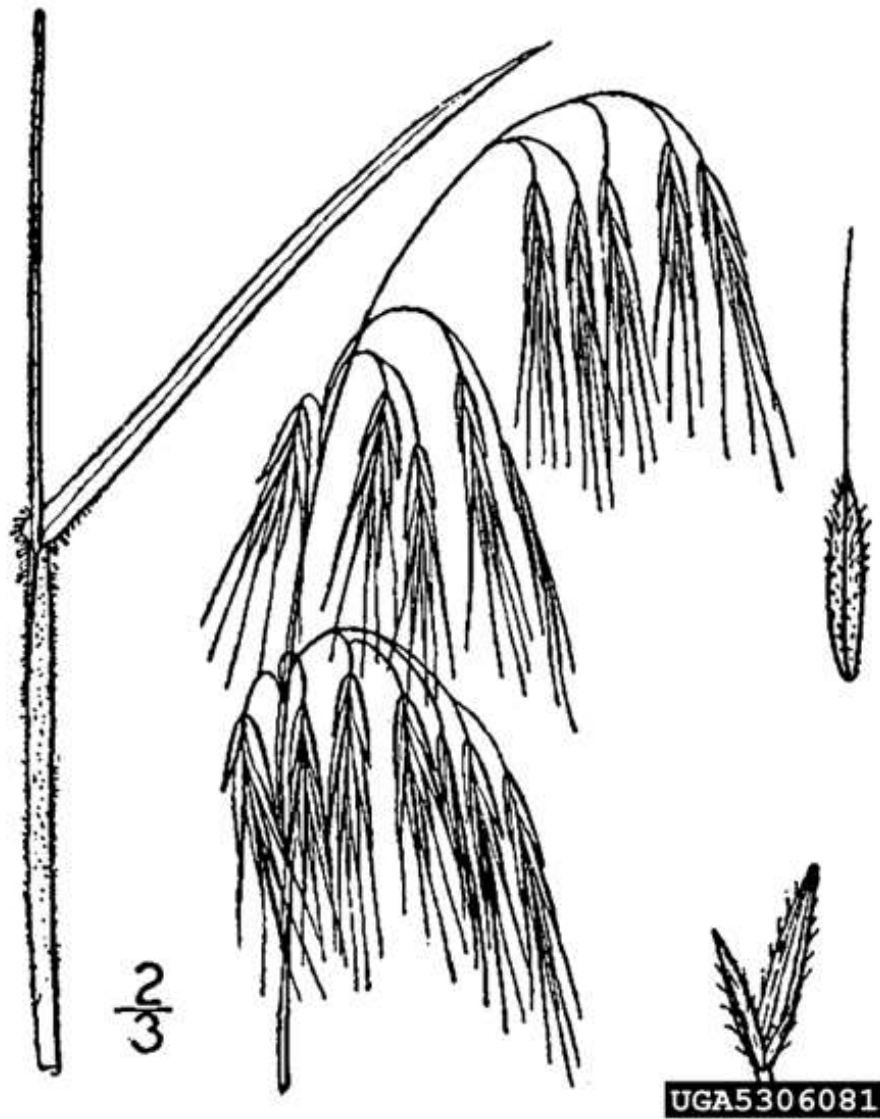
## New Mexico Thistle – Native!

Native New Mexico Thistle (*Cirsium neomexicanum*) is widespread and sometimes abundant in arid parts of New Mexico. It has a much smaller rosette than Scotch thistle and it typically grows 6 to 8 feet tall. It blooms from May through June and enjoys rocky slopes, roadsides, and dry arroyos. The New Mexico Native Thistle is ecologically important for our pollinators.



## Downy Brome – Noxious!

Downy brome (*Bromus tectorum*), also known as Cheatgrass and drooping brome, is an aggressive invader of sagebrush, pinyon-juniper, ponderosa pine, mountain brush, and other rangeland and forest communities. Its ability to rapidly grow and reproduce before most native grasses makes it especially troublesome on rangelands, croplands, and pastures. When Downy brome dies, the mature seeds become viscously sharp with awns that are designed to work their way into wool or hair. They cause injury to the eyes, mouths, throats, and digestive systems of grazing animals and pets. When flowering, the seeds become purplish in color.



## Blue Gramma – Native!

Blue gramma grass (*Bouteloua gracilis*) is the official State grass of New Mexico! It occurs in all 33 counties of New Mexico and it is the most valuable forage grass in the state for cattle. Sometimes called white gramma, this grass is neither blue nor white! Native Americans ground the seeds to make a flour for bread.



## Russian Olive – Noxious!

Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia* L.) is a noxious tree in New Mexico that grows in or around riparian zones. It inevitably crowds out native trees such as cottonwoods and willows. This reduces flora and fauna species in the riparian zone, and harms wildlife habitat by altering the flood regime, reducing the availability of nutrients to native species, and overcrowding stream banks. The leaves are sage-colored and they have sharp pricklers along the branches. Don't step on them!





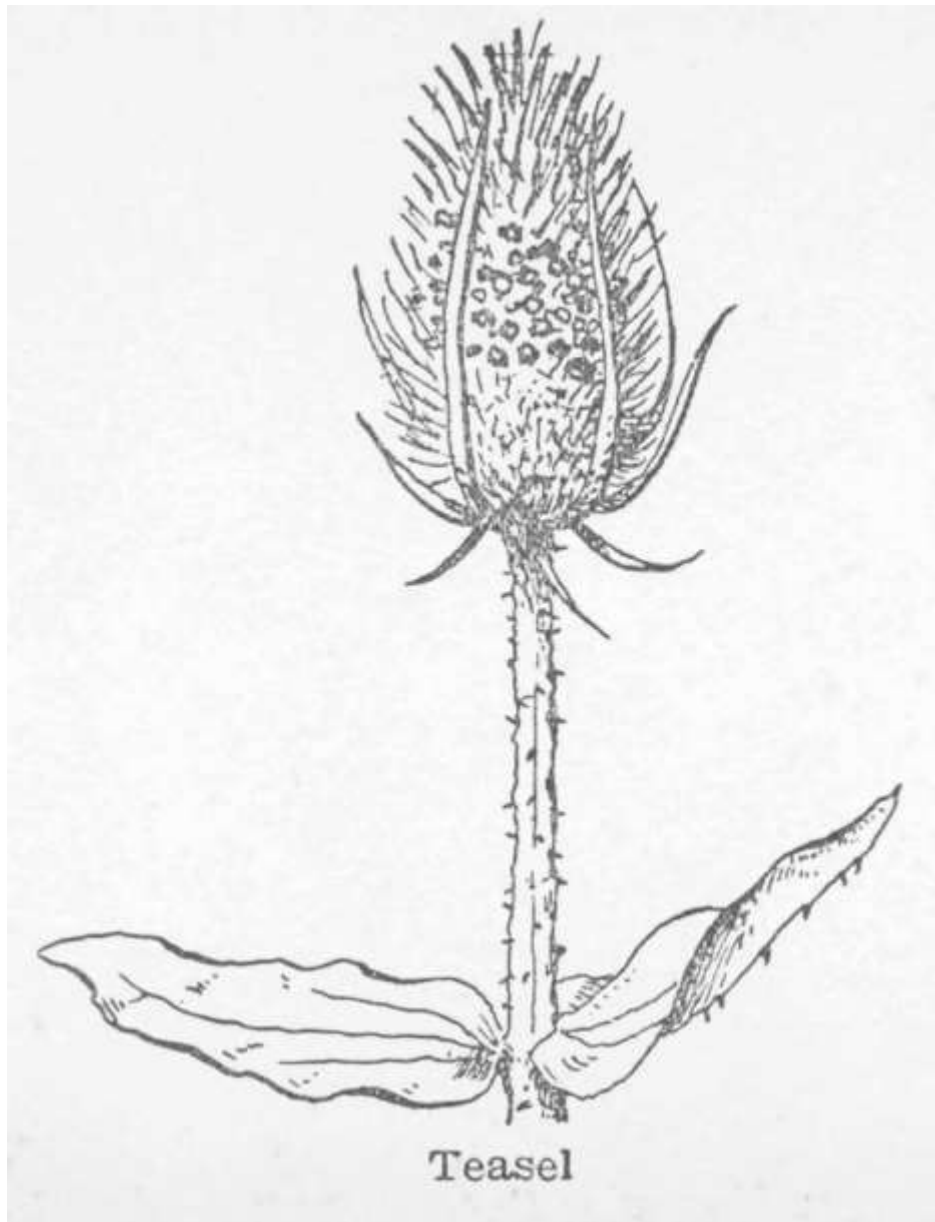
## Gambel Oak – Native!

Gambel Oak (*Quercus gambelii* Nutt.) provides forage for livestock and wildlife though when eaten in large amounts can cause sickness. It is used to construct fence posts and can be used for firewood. The acorns are edible after the tannic acid is removed and Native Americans used them to thicken soup. They range in size from 6 to 30 feet tall and reproduce both from roots and seeds.



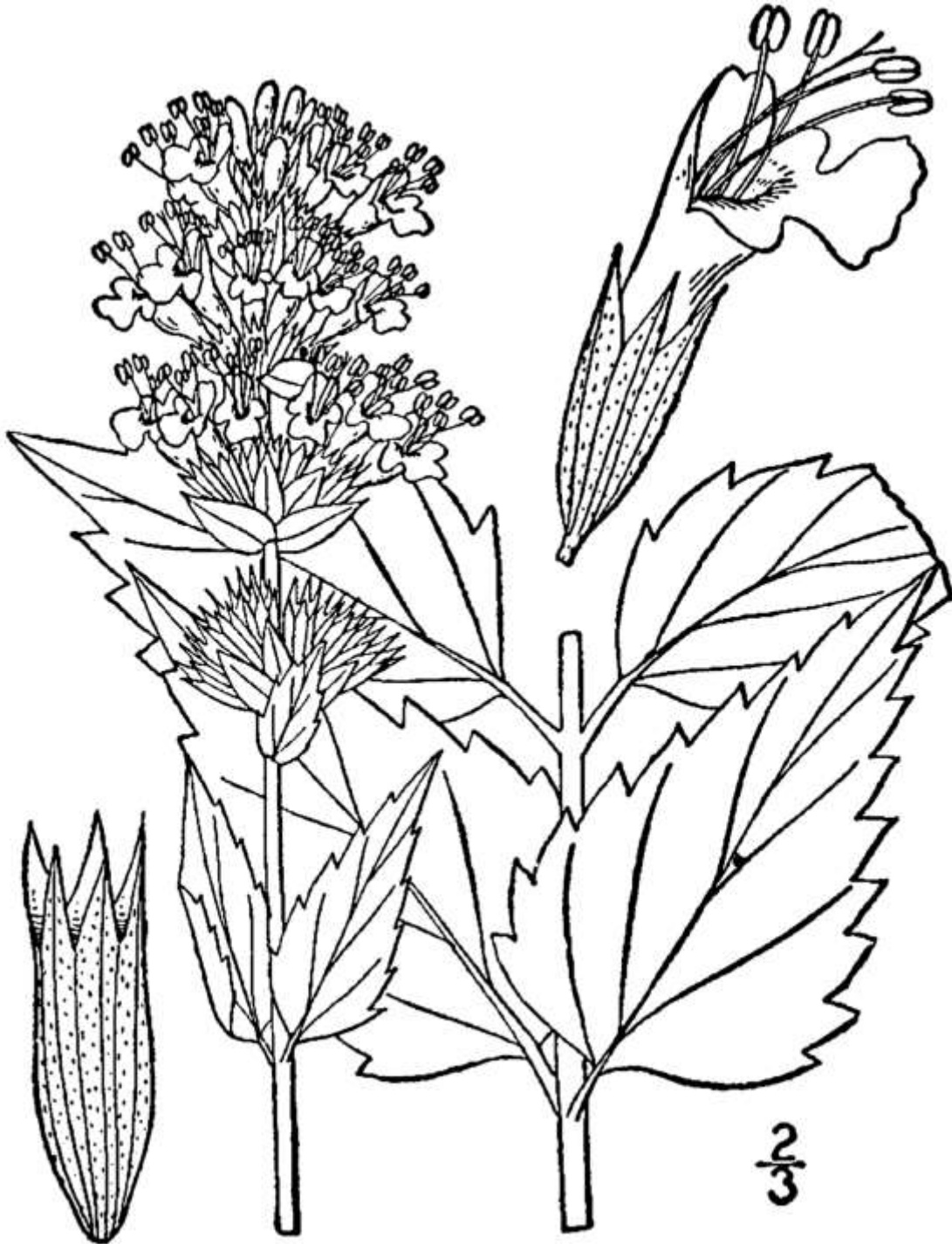
## Common Teasel – Noxious!

Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum* L.) is a weedy biennial or short-lived perennial with prickly stems and a distinctive cone-shaped flower head. Teasel flowers from early summer until early fall and has oval shaped flower heads with rings of small, densely packed lavender flowers. Each flower usually only lives for one day. Its rosettes and leaves are wrinkled and sometimes hairy. Teasel can be an aggressive competitor allowing it to displace desirable plants and form a monoculture (nothing else can grow there). Its presence reduces and contributes to decline in species diversity and range quality.



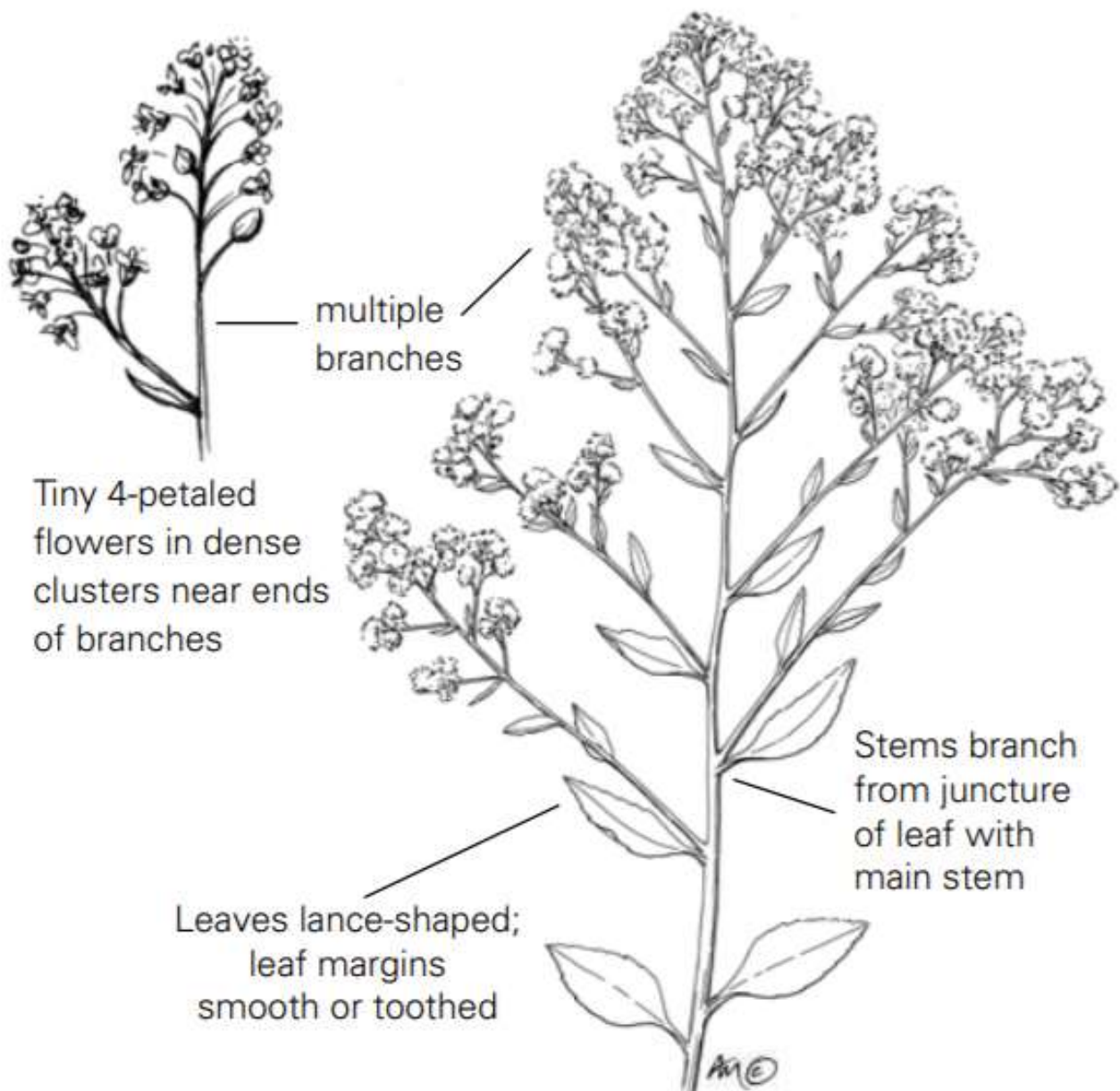
## NM Giant Wild Hyssop – Native!

New Mexico Giant Wild Hyssop (*Agastache pallidiflora* var. *neomexicana*) is also known as Hummingbird Mint. It is a showy, fragrant, long-blooming perennial. It is a pollinator-friendly plant and has excellent resistance to browsing deer and rabbits. While the leaves are green, they can look greyish due to a light covering of hairs.



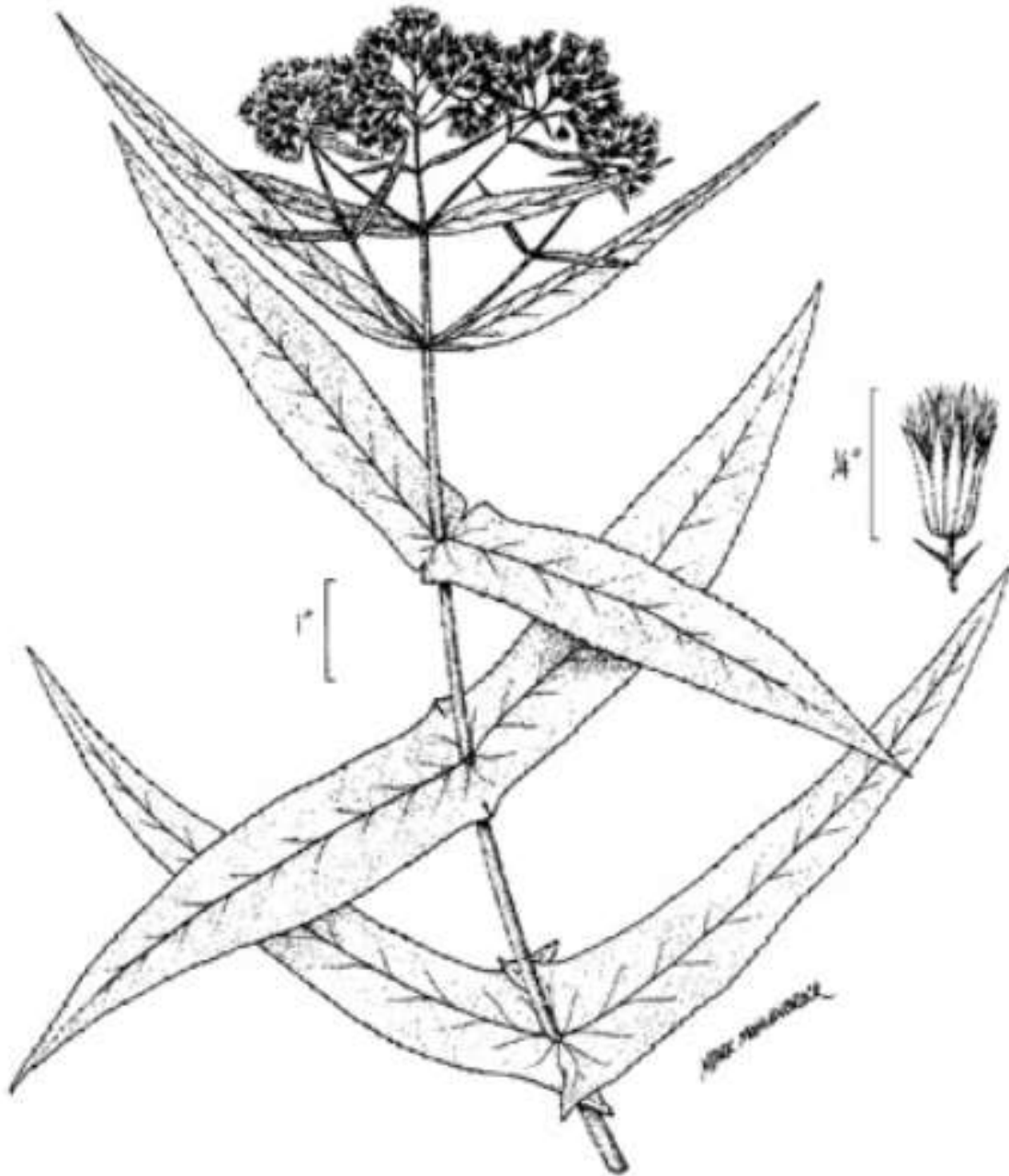
# Perennial Pepperweed – Noxious!

Perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*) is also known as tall whitetop, ironweed, perennial peppergrass, and broad-leaved pepperweed. It is a white-flowered perennial weed that is part of the mustard family. Once established, it is very difficult to control. Infestations easily spread along waterways and acequias and can dominate entire stream corridors and agricultural areas. When old plants die, their woody structure remains resulting in large areas of dense, forbidding, and unusable land. This is highly consequential for native plants and wildlife.



## Common Boneset – Native!

Common boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*) is a large clump-forming perennial shrub with small white flowers that appear in late summer and fall. While it is a beneficial pollinator it has also been used as a medicinal plant. The dried leaves have been used to make boneset tea, which some think helps fight colds and coughs. The name boneset comes from its early usage in setting broken bones (the leaves were used in bandages).



## Bonus Word Search Fun!

V	N	S	W	B	O	N	E	S	E	T	M	U	F	U	P	A	G
Y	B	L	U	E	G	R	A	M	M	A	F	J	C	D	F	N	A
C	O	M	M	O	N	T	E	A	S	E	L	P	H	M	D	Q	M
X	A	U	E	T	U	W	I	L	D	H	Y	S	S	O	P	O	B
N	N	J	G	S	X	J	N	Y	M	I	P	N	D	E	J	P	E
R	O	S	C	O	T	C	H	T	H	I	S	T	L	E	M	P	L
R	X	A	N	A	T	I	V	E	T	H	I	S	T	L	E	L	O
R	I	P	O	L	L	I	N	A	T	O	R	S	P	C	Q	A	A
V	O	Q	Y	I	H	D	N	A	T	I	V	E	O	F	T	N	K
F	U	X	H	R	U	S	S	I	A	N	O	L	I	V	E	T	P
Q	S	W	V	K	T	K	F	V	E	W	E	E	D	Y	A	N	K
D	O	W	N	Y	B	R	O	M	E	Z	Q	G	P	B	K	Y	P

Find the following words in the puzzle.  
Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

BLUE GRAMMA  
BONESET  
COMMON TEASEL  
DOWNY BROME  
GAMBEL OAK

NATIVE  
NATIVE THISTLE  
NOXIOUS  
PLANT  
POLLINATORS

RUSSIAN OLIVE  
SCOTCH THISTLE  
WEED  
WILD HYSSOP

### ***What is a noxious weed?***

*A plant is called a noxious weed when it is not native (meaning it was brought here from somewhere else) and it is damaging to our local ecology. Noxious weeds typically can cause damage to agricultural production, wildlife, native plant populations, public health, recreation or public and private property. Noxious weeds tend to be very aggressive and unless controlled, will dominate entire landscapes and can cause irreversible harm.*

### ***Noxious Weed Color Guide***

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**Scotch Thistle – Noxious!**



**Downy Brome – Noxious!**



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**Russian Olive – Noxious!**



**Common Teasel – Noxious!**



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**Perennial Pepperweed – Noxious!**



This coloring book was put together by the Taos County Cooperative Weed Management Area (Taos County CWMA) with **funding provided by the Native Plant Society of New Mexico**. Entries in this collection show the invasive weed and then a preferred native plant replacement. The Taos County CWMA encourages all ages to become familiar with our region's flora and cooperation in working together to minimize invasive weeds and promote native plant species that support biodiversity within our bioregion.

*Taos County CWMA Members:*

