

PLUMELESS THISTLE

Carduus acanthoides L.

Prohibited - Control

Common Names

Spiny Plumeless Thistle

Life Cycle

Herbaceous biennial

Native Range

Eurasia

Look-a-Likes

[Canada Thistle \(pg 25\)](#)

[Musk Thistle \(pg 68\)](#)

Native Thistles

[Swamp Thistle \(pg 97\)](#)

Habitat

Found on dry to moist soils in pastures, woodlands, waste areas, along roadsides, ditches and stream banks.

Means of Spread

Prolific seed producer building a large seed bank in a short period of time. Movement is greatly increased by animal and/or human activities such as mowing or haying.



Identification

Plant - Herbaceous, biennial reaching heights of 1 to 4 feet. Stems are branched and covered with numerous spiny leaves.

Leaves - Edges of rosette leaves are wavy with yellowish spines. Stem leaves are alternate, attached directly to stems and typically have hairs on bottoms along mid-veins.

Flower - Numerous stem branches support terminal, single, composite flowers that are ½ to 1½ inches wide. Linear or narrow bracts with short spines are found immediately below pink to purple flowers.

Bloom Time - July to October

Seed and Fruit - Small seeds approximately ⅙ inch long described as straw colored and tufted with fibers on the terminal end. The fibers aid in wind dispersal.

Root - Deep, fibrous taproot.

Management

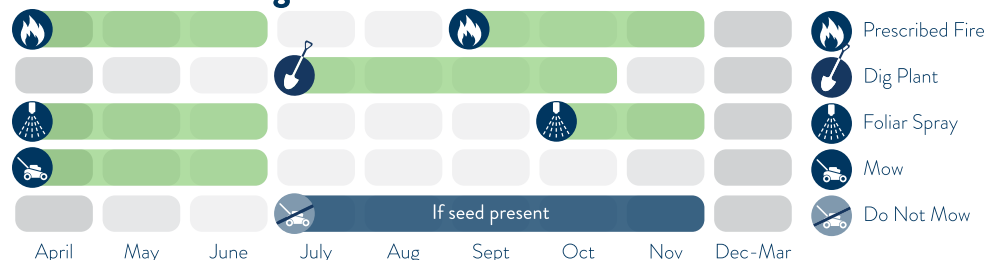
Mechanical - Control measures should focus on eliminating seed production and exhaustion of seed banks. Cutting taproots 1 to 2 inches below ground is effective but time consuming for large numbers of plants. Mowing should be timed at flower bud stage to prevent seed production and should be repeated 2 to 3 times per season to be effective. Avoid spreading seed with hay or straw and with mowing and vehicle movement through infestations.

Chemical - Foliar applications timed at the early bolting, budding or flowering stage.

Cultural - Goats and sheep will graze while plants are in the budding stage, reducing seed production.



Treatment Timing



Fire - Prescribed fire can be used to encourage stands of native grasses that will outcompete thistle.

Effective herbicide formulations: 2,4-D ester, aminopyralid, clopyralid, dicamba, metsulfuron, triclopyr.