

Plumeless Thistle

(*Carduus acanthoides*)

Sunflower Family

General Description: Plumeless thistle is an introduced winter annual or biennial which rarely flowers during its first year.

It is an extremely prolific seed producer. It typically occurs in pastures, river valleys and roadsides. This thistle species is a regionally noxious weed in the Central Kootenay district.

Stems:

- ◆ 0.3 to 1.2 m (1 to 4 ft) tall
- ◆ freely branched above and covered with spiny wings extending to the flowerheads

Leaves:

- ◆ bottom leaves are usually 10 to 20 cm (4 to 8 in) long, wavy with yellow spines along the leaf margins
- ◆ alternate, stalkless and blend into the stem

Flowers:

- ◆ bloom from May to July
- ◆ purplish-pink flowers are solitary at the ends of branches or in clusters of 2 to 5
- ◆ flowerheads are 2.5 to 5 cm (1 to 2 in) in diameter
- ◆ bracts on flowerheads appear as sharp spines
- ◆ very narrow, lance-shaped, sparsely to densely hairy

Treatment:

- ◆ **Chemical control:** good control with spring applications of picloram or 2,4-D Amine 500
- ◆ **Physical control:** plants can be clipped to reduce seed production and hence spread potential; clipping can cause re-sprouting, so persistence will be required to deplete the roots.
- ◆ **Cultural control:** increasing competition should be encouraged where practical.

Consult your local Ministry of Agriculture and Food office for the most current information on appropriate chemical controls. As with all pesticide treatment, herbicide applicators must handle and apply herbicides in a safe and responsible manner, as dictated by legislation and guidelines under the *Pesticide Control Act*.

Additional Notes:

- ◆ may be confused with nodding thistle (*Carduus nutans*) but has smaller flowers and lacks the prominent white margin present on nodding thistle leaves
- ◆ can hybridize with nodding thistle



Photos courtesy of: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Province of British Columbia

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