

Plumeless Thistle Fact Sheet

Carduus acanthoides

Asteraceae Family



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Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** Flower heads are Red-Purple in color and can span up to 1 inch. Flower stems are branching with spiny wings extending to the flower head.
- ❷ **Seeds:** Seeds are oblong, striated, and slightly curved. They are mainly wind-dispersed and can remain viable in the soil for up to 10 years.
- ❸ **Leaves:** The leaves of the basal rosette are 4-8 inches long and have spiny teeth. The stem leaves are alternate and attach directly to the stem. They are sparsely hairy underneath.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** Spiny Plumeless Thistle flowers from June through August.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Spiny Plumeless Thistle is a biennial, meaning it produces a basal rosette in its first season with the stems and flowering bodies coming the season after. It flowers and disperses seeds from early to mid-summer.

Impacts:

- Spiny Plumeless Thistle is unpalatable to livestock and can greatly reduce an areas' forage potential if allowed to spread.
- Although not a great danger to undisturbed areas, Spiny Plumeless Thistle rapidly spreads throughout disturbed areas.
- Spiny Plumeless Thistle forms thick monocultures which can greatly reduce the biodiversity in an area.

Control:

- Prior to flowering, small infestations can be effectively controlled by hand pulling or digging while being careful to ensure the removal of the entire root system. Mowing and cutting plants can also be effective if done prior to seed production.
- If using herbicides, be careful to comply with all written regulations in your area for your herbicide of choice.
- Spiny Plumeless Thistle can also be effectively controlled through responsible grazing practices.



Released by 'Stickpen', Gary L. Piper, Washington State University.



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