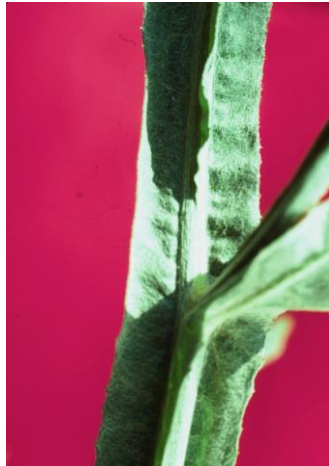


# Yellow Starthistle Fact Sheet

*Centaurea solstitialis*

*Asteraceae* Family



Left & center photos by Steve Dewey, Utah State University, Bugwood.org

## Distinguishing Features:

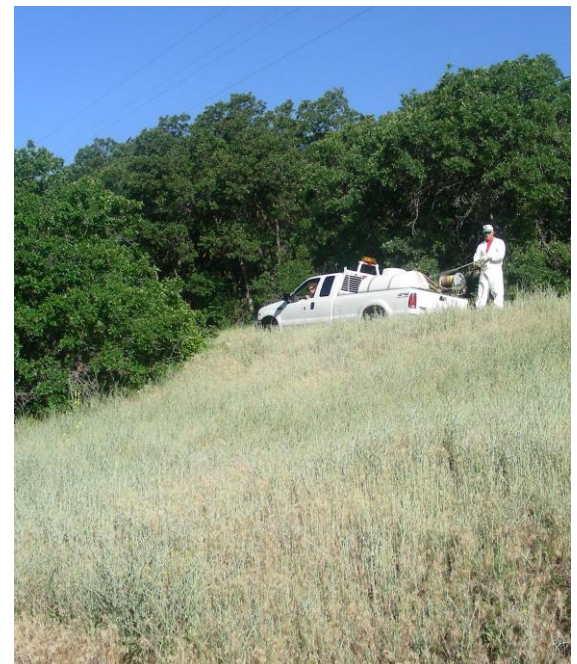
- ❶ **Flowers:** Single yellow flowers per branch.
- ❷ **Seeds:** A single plant can produce 150,000 seeds per year.
- ❸ **Leaves:** Sparse along the stem; Woolly and deeply lobed.
- ❹ **Flowering time:** June through August.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Winter annual (i.e. germinates in the fall and then flowers the following summer).

## Impacts:

- Yellow starthistle is extremely competitive with annual grasses on rangelands, pastures and fields.
- It often completely changes the natural habitat it invades, native plant communities are lost, erosion is increased, and wildlife forage is reduced.
- When horses eat yellow starthistle, it causes "Chewing Disease," a fatal neurological disorder.
- Lastly, the large spines make it difficult for recreational activities such as hiking, biking, and horse riding.

## Control:

- For long term management, a multi-faceted approach including chemical, biological, and cultural practices is most effective.
- As an annual, Yellow starthistle must produce seed every year in order to remain competitive; Spring applications of 2, 4-D, Dicamba, or triclopyr are effective in the seedling stage.
- In both small and large infestations, plant competition by seeding disturbed areas with desirable grass species that will compete for resources but not be affected by the broad leaf herbicides is best for long-term management.



Salt Lake County Weed Program staff spray yellow starthistle near Little Dell Reservoir.

\*Please visit our website for references sourcing this information.



Salt Lake County Weed  
Control Program  
[www.slco.org/weeds/](http://www.slco.org/weeds/)  
385-468-4035  
noxiousweeds@slco.org