



Fact Sheet 98-70

WANTED— Dead, Not Alive!

This outlaw weed is hiding out! Find it. Eradicate it.

Musk Thistle

Alias: *Carduus nutans*

Musk thistle, also known as nodding thistle, is a native of southern Europe and Asia that invades pasture and forestlands, ditch banks, waste areas, and stream banks. Musk thistle is a biennial or sometimes a winter annual. Its dense growth and spiny nature inhibits the use of an area by people and animals. Tillage is not recommended for control because cut roots may resprout. Chemical and biological controls are effective on this aggressive plant. This weed is listed as a noxious weed by Nevada Administrative Code.



The dense growth and spiny nature of musk thistle inhibits the use of an area by people and animals.



Distinguishing features

- ◆ Robust plant growing up to 6 feet tall.
- ◆ Leaves are waxy, up to 10 inches long, spiny, deeply lobed (5 points per lobe), and dark green with a light green midrib and white margins.
- ◆ Flowers are solitary with nodding flower heads at the stem tips in midsummer. Heads grow to a diameter of 1½ to 3 inches. Blossoms are deep rose to violet and sometimes white. They are surrounded by lance-shaped, spine-tipped bracts.

Take action:

- ◆ Report its location to the land owner, gardener, manager or park ranger.
- ◆ Herbicide application or mechanical removal during the rosette stage can control this weed.
- ◆ Multiple mowings to remove flowers are an effective, but expensive, control.
- ◆ Dispose of the seeds, shoots, and roots, all of which can grow a new plant, in a sealed garbage bag through the trash. To avoid wind dispersal of the downy seeds, dispose of seed head carefully. Herbicides may also be available to kill this plant.

Your reward:

A cleaner, healthier environment and the satisfaction that you have helped make the difference!

For more information about controlling this and other invasive weeds, contact:

Nevada Cooperative Extension
775-784-1334;

Nevada Division of Agriculture
Bureau of Plant Industry,
775-688-1180; or

Your local Weed District manager or
Conservation District: