

*Carduus nutans*

# Musk Thistle

Other common names:

nodding thistle, nodding plumeless thistle

Asteraceae, the sunflower family

Category: CONTROL



## Diagnostic Characteristics

- Biennial or winter annual; can grow up to 6 feet tall
- Plants exist as basal rosettes until flowering stems develop
- Basal leaves elliptic to lance-shaped, pinnately lobed, and prickly-toothed margins
- Leaves 1-2 pinnate lobed, non-hairy to woolly
- Flower heads are 1½ -3 inches wide, spherical, solitary, nodding, and consist of purple to pink disk flowers; bracts surrounding flowers are spine-tipped and overlapping in several rows

## Background

- Native to Eurasia; likely introduced as an ornamental
- Inhabits non-crop areas, rangelands, pastures, meadows, forests, streambanks, and rights-of-way
- Reproduces by seed
- Can hybridize with plumeless thistle

Photo Credit:

J.M. DiTomaso, The Regents of the University of California

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