

Plumeless thistle

(Carduus acanthoides)

Is Plumeless thistle on your property?

If you need help with identifying thistles or see any sites of infestation, please contact us on freephone 0508 800 800.



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Identification

Erect biennial plant growing to 1-2 m. Very similar to nodding thistle with small flower heads. The young plants are rosettes with a cluster of spiny leaves radiating from a central crown. Upper leaf surfaces with a metallic sheen and a whitish margin especially at the bases of the spines. Characteristic small solitary thistle-like flower heads, with red-purple petals. Masses of seeds with pappus of fluffy white hairs, in summer.

Weedy characteristics

Prolific seeders – each plant can produce up to 30,000 seeds. Seeds long lived (15-20 years), widely dispersed and rapid growth. Tolerant to a wide range of habitats, including dry open areas, cold and heat, and grazing.

Methods of dispersal

Mainly wind, but occasionally float on water. Carried by soil movement, machinery and livestock.

Impact on indigenous plants

Low impact on indigenous plants as intolerant to shade.

Typical habitats

Most open areas, short tussockland, forest clearings, overgrazed pasture with bare areas.

Control

1. Remove mature seed heads and burn.
2. Mow where desirable species are lower and will not get damaged.
3. Spray in early spring or late winter to catch the rosette stage, with 24D or MCPA at label rates.

Site management

Ensure biological control agents are present. Good grazing management will avoid bare patches on pasture and limit reseeding.

Species recovery

Will seed any bare patches rapidly. Mown plants may resprout, especially during the growing season.

For more information freephone 0508 800 800.

