

Italian plumeless thistle Carduus pycnocephalus

Description

Introduced to North America on ships' ballast.

Habit

Spiny annual or sometimes biennial growing to a height of 6-8 feet.

Leaves

Green and nearly hairless above, cobwebby hairs below. Pinnately lobed into spiny-lobed segments, terminal spine prominent.

Stems

Spiny, winged stems.

Flowers

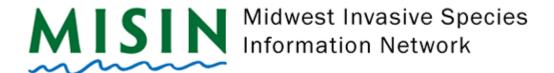
Purple in color, narrow, borne in terminal clusters of 1-5. Bracts at the base of the flowerheads are stiff, upright with forward pointing hairs.

Fruits and Seeds

Light brown to brown with veins, 4-6 mm. long with hair at one end.

Habitat





Native to southern and western Europe. Can be found in disturbed sites, pastures, rangeland, right-of-ways, and waste areas.

Reproduction

By seed.

Similar

Slenderflower thistle (Carduus tenuiflorus)

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Grazing animals have shown to be effect in reducing density. Two fungi have been evaluated as agents on Italian thistle.

Credits

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