

Curly plumeless thistle

Carduus crispus

Description

Favorite foodplant of caterpillars of the Painted Lady butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*). Extracts from this plant have been found to have anti-cancer properties such as Crispine B.

Habit

Herbaceous, drought-tolerant, 50-180 cm (20-70 in) tall.

Leaves

Alternate, lowest short-stalked, upper stalkless; edged of stalks winged; blade elliptic; pinnately lobed (sometimes only toothed margin); edges spiny; underside usually white-haired, top sparsely haired.

Stems

Branching, broadly winged, spiny, woolly, greyish in color, spines 2.5 mm long, quite delicate.

Flowers

Violet/lavender or purple in color; single,





flower-like, 1.5-2.5 cm (0.6-1 in) capitula surrounded by involucre bracts; pedicels spineless, densely haired, capitula in dense clusters of 3-5.

Fruits and Seeds

Roundish, slightly flattened, glabrous, glossy, shiny, yellowish brown, 3-4 mm (0.12-0.16 in.) long cypsela, tip with 8-12 mm (0.32-0.48 in.) long unbranched hairs.

Habitat

Native to Europe and Asia; Found in yards, fields, pastures, logging sites, railway yards, banks, heaps of earth, wasteland, around inhabited areas.

Reproduction

By seed.

Similar

Spiny plumeless thistle (*Carduus acanthoides*).

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Hand-pulling, making sure to remove all fragments; effectively controlled using any of the several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate or triclopyr.

Credits

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