

Spiny plumeless thistle

Carduus acanthoides

Description

First discovered in the United States and Canada in Camden, New Jersey in 1878. This species is listed as a prohibited noxious weed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

Habit

Erect, biennial, 1-4 ft forb, stems tough, spiny-winged.

Leaves

Deeply lobed to pinnately-divided, up to 25 cm long and 8 cm wide, midrib beneath covered with long, soft hairs.

Stems

Erect, growing to 1-4 ft and having a stout, fleshy taproot. Freely branched above and covered with leaf-like spines that extend up to the flowering





heads.

Flowers

Solitary flower heads at the ends of branches or in clusters of 2-5, bracts are narrowly lance-shaped and appear as sharp spines, Purplish to pink in color, clustered in heads that are 1-2 in in diameter; blooms from July to October.

Fruits and Seeds

4 angled, dry seed with a fluffy, but not feathery pappus, oblong, striate and slightly curved.

Habitat

Native to Europe and Asia. Grows well in disturbed areas such as pastures, roadsides, and railroad right-of-ways.

Reproduction

By seed.

Similar

Nodding thistle (*Carduus nutans*), which can be distinguished by the rosettes, which on the spiny plumeless thistle by its deeply serrate leaves. It can also be distinguished by its leaf-like spines on the stem and hairs on the underside of the leaf.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Hand-pulling is most effective on small populations, can be done throughout the year but most effective

prior to seed development. Effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate or triclopyr. Also, two weevils, the thistlehead-feeding weevil and the rosette weevil have been introduced and has shown notable success (but this may impact native thistles).

Credits

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