

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 effective in reducing density. Two fungi have been evaluated as agents on Italian thistle.

Credits

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