

**WRITTEN FINDINGS OF THE  
WASHINGTON STATE NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD**

Scientific Name: *Carduus acanthoides* L.

Common Name: Plumeless thistle

Family: Compositae

Legal Status: Class B: (a) regions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10  
(b) region 4 except those areas within Stevens County lying north of State Highway 20

Description and Variation: Erect biennial up to eight feet tall. Leaves dark green with hair on underside and sharp spines along leaf margins. Stems and peduncles have spiny wings. Solitary or clusters of two to three flower heads bearing reddish purple florets.

Economic Importance: Noxious weed of pasture and rangeland, it crowds out more desirable forage and excludes livestock grazing where infestations are dense.

Geographical Distribution: Plumeless thistle is a native of Europe and is found in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia. It is reportedly frequent in Idaho and Wyoming. In Washington it is found in Stevens County.

Habitat: Plumeless thistle occurs in pastures, stream valleys, fields and roadsides.

History: Plumeless thistle was identified in Stevens County in the early 1960's.

Growth and Development: Biennial

Reproduction: Seed

Hybrids: Sometimes hybridizes with musk thistle, *Carduus nutans*.

Response to Herbicides: Picloram and 2,4-D are effective.

Response to Cultural Methods: Digging, grubbing, or hand-pulling small infestations is effective.

Bio-Control Potentials: *Rhynocillus conicus* may be used.

References:

Dunn, P.H. 1976. Distribution of *Carduus nutans*, *C. acanthoides*, *C. pycnocephalus*, and *C. crispus* in the United States. *Weed Science* 24:518-524.

Frankton, Clarence and Gerald Mulligan. 1987. *Weeds of Canada*. New Canada Publications.

Whitson, Tom D. 1987. *Weeds and Poisonous Plants of Wyoming and Utah*. University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension.