

Have you seen this invasive plant?

Milk thistle is an annual or biennial weed that is toxic to livestock.

Learn more at www.nwcb.wa.gov



The flowers of milk thistle are distinctive. Each stem produces a single 2 inch wide purple flowerhead surrounded by broad, leathery bracts tipped with stiff spines ($\frac{3}{4}$ -2 inches long).

Rosettes can expand 3 feet or wider and the stout, rigid main stem can reach 2-6 feet tall.



Dark green leaves have spiny edges and distinct white patches or marbling along the leaf veins. Basal leaves are deeply lobed and up to 20 inches long by 10 inches wide. Stem leaves are smaller and less lobed.

Why is milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*) a noxious weed?

- The broad growth habit of milk thistle can displace a large number of native and forage species.
- Milk thistle can be lethal to livestock when ingested.

Where do you find milk thistle?

- This noxious weed prefers fertile soils and in Washington is often found in pastures with heavy disturbance and exposed soil.
- It can also be found in dense stands along roadsides, ditches and waste areas.

What can you do?

- Learn to identify this Class A noxious weed.
- Please note that eradication of this plant is required in Washington State to prevent it from gaining a foothold.
- Report any sightings to your county noxious weed control board or to noxiousweeds@agr.wa.gov.

