

Plant: Musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*)

Identification: This is an extremely invasive biennial plant that will take over any area it can. It will have a rosette the first year which can be around 3 feet across, then send up 1-6 stems that can reach up to 6 feet tall and can branch out half way up them as well. Musk thistles have bright pink to purple flower heads, which can be the size of a baseball. This plant reproduces by seed, and each plant can have anywhere from 3,500 to 10,000 seeds. As most thistles, its leaves and stems are very prickly and animals will generally avoid them.

Defense: As with most annual and biennial plants it can be controlled with a shovel. Ensure that you get at least 4 inches of the root or it will grow back. Roundup and 2,4-D are not effective on this plant except in the early spring. Using advanced products such as Escort XP and Telar XP are very effective as well as Curtail, Milestone, and Opensight. Treatment at full bloom can be very effective, as the next batch of rosettes may be coming up and becoming visible.

Always read and understand the label and restrictions on any pesticide you are using.

The label is the law.

