

YELLOW STARHISTLE

Centaurea solstitialis

Asteraceae, the sunflower family

Category: Containment

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FACTSHEET INFORMATION

Summary of Invasiveness

- Yellow starthistle is an invasive plant that rapidly reproduces to form dense monocultures, inhibiting the growth of nearby plants.
- The plant reduces biodiversity, wildlife habitats, and hay values, and can disrupt recreational activities.
- It's sharp spines deter grazing animals and if ingested are toxic to horses, causing chewing disease.

Description

- Winter annual growing up to 6 feet tall.
- Rosettes bolt to form bushy, rigid, woolly stems that branch near the base.
- Bluish-green leaves covered with fine, white, cotton-like hairs extend down stem giving a winged appearance.
- Bright yellow flower heads develop singly at branch ends and yellow spines up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long extend from lower bracts.
- Two types of seeds are produced, both smooth, oblong, and notched on one side. One is dark brown and the other is lighter colored with plume of white, thin, bristle-like spines.

Introduction and Movement

- Yellow starthistle is native to Eurasia and the Mediterranean and was introduced to the U.S. as a seed contaminant.
- Inhabits disturbed areas such as roadsides, rangelands, and pastures.
- Plumed seeds can easily be dispersed by sticking to shoes, clothing, vehicles, and animal fur. Many bird species feed on the seeds and serve as vectors for long-distance dispersal.

Prevention Strategy

- To prevent accidental introductions, learn how to identify Yellow starthistle and eradicate infestations on your property.
- Always remove and properly dispose of all seed and plant materials on vehicles, clothing, shoes and pets before you exit or enter outdoor recreational sites.
- Always Remember To: **KNOCK IT OFF!**

Sources

- CABI Invasive Species Compendium: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/12043>
- Idaho's Noxious Weeds 9th Edition, University of Idaho: <http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/publishing/pdf/BUL/BUL816.pdf>.



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DISTRIBUTION MAP

