

# STOP THE SPREAD

## Nodding Thistle

*Carduus nutans*



Preventing the production of seeds is key when controlling this invasive species.

### UNWANTED PLANTS

#### Origin

Also known as musk thistle, this biennial or winter annual is native to Europe and was introduced in the late 1800's as a contaminant of alfalfa or clover seed.

#### Status

Nodding Thistle is found in the Pembina Valley area of Manitoba.

#### Impacts

Once established, nodding thistle can reduce forage for livestock and wildlife because the grazers prefer the native vegetation giving the plant a competitive advantage. It can also increase surface water runoff, soil erosion and stream sedimentation.

#### Where to Look

Nodding Thistle prefers dry areas like gravel sites and disturbed areas such as roadsides, railroads and overgrazed land, but can invade healthy plant communities.

#### Control

Hand-digging or mowing can provide control if repeated over a number of years. Mowing just before seed set is effective, but the debris should be collected and burned. Severing the taproot just below ground will kill plants.



#### Look For:

**Stem:** Can grow between 0.2 -2.5 m tall

**Leaves:** Have curvy spiny edges, a waxy surface and tend to clasp at the stem

**Flowers:** Solitary flowers can be found at the end of the stem and range in colour from red to purple. A single flower can produce 1,200 seeds which can be viable for up to 10 years. Blooms throughout summer.

**Report a Sighting:**

Invasive Species Council of Manitoba

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