



Musk Thistle

Carduus nutans



- Biennial
- Grows 1 to 6 feet tall
- Blooms June and July
- Grows in waste areas, pastures, fence lines, and right of ways
- Nodding Flower heads

**Cache County Vegetation
Management Division
435-755-1562
jake.forsgren@cachecounty.gov**

Suggested Control Methods for Musk Thistle

Chemical Control

Best Timing: Young rosette stage (fall or spring) for best results; before flowering for any stage.

Effective Options: 2,4-D, Dicamba, Picloram, Aminopyralid, Metsulfuron, and Clopyralid.

Mechanical & Cultural Control

Mowing: Mow at late bud or early bloom stage (before pink appears) to prevent seed set; repeat as needed.

Digging/Hoeing: For scattered plants, cut the taproot 2-4 inches below the crown to kill the plant.

Preventing Spread: Clean equipment, use weed-free feed, and manage grazing to favor desirable plants.

Biological Control & Prevention

Biocontrol Agents: Seed head weevils and other insects are available and can reduce seed production but work slowly.

Prevention: Clean vehicles and waterways, use clean seed/hay, and implement good land management to outcompete thistle.

Integrated Management

Combine methods (cultural, mechanical, chemical, biological) for the most sustainable long-term control, as no single method usually eradicates it.