



# Yellow Starthistle

*Centaurea solstitialis*



- Annual
- Grows 2 to 3 feet tall
- Stems are winged and sparsely leaved
- Blooms early summer
- Flowers are yellow with thorn on seed bracts

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# Suggested Control Methods for Yellow Starthistle

## Mechanical & Manual Methods

**Hand-Pulling/Digging:** Effective for small patches, especially in fall or wet spring soil; pull before flowering and remove the entire root.

**Mowing:** Timed mowing in the late spiny or early flowering stage can reduce seed, but may require multiple passes as plants re-sprout low; best for plants with high branching.

**Cultivation:** A single, shallow cultivation after the last rain but before seed set can control seedlings.

## Chemical Control

**Herbicides:** Use pre- or post-emergent herbicides in non-crop areas, but always check labels and consult advisors, considering non-target plants.

## Grazing & Biological Control

**Grazing:** Goats and sheep will eat starthistle, especially after spines form; cattle are less effective.

**Biologicals:** Weevils (hairy weevil), and rust fungus reduce seed production but don't eliminate infestations alone.

## Integrated & Preventative Practices

**Competition:** Plant native perennial grasses and legumes to outcompete starthistle.

**Prevention:** Use certified weed-free hay/seed, thoroughly clean vehicles/animals after passing through infested areas, and avoid disturbing soil.

**Prescribed Fire:** Can be combined with herbicides for large areas.

## Key Strategy: Target Seed Production

Focus on methods that prevent seeds from forming, such as fall cultivation, spring mowing, or grazing before spiny heads appear, to break the weed's life cycle.