

Yellow Star Thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*)

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Erect, winter hardy, annual herb up to 1.5 metres tall. Forms impenetrable stands. Introduced from Europe in contaminated alfalfa.



Distribution

Not currently found within the Southern Interior.

Please report **all** occurrences.

Quick ID

Bright yellow flowers.

Wing-like leaves run down length of stem.

Hairy 'cotton ball' seed head persists throughout winter.

Long sharp spines radiate from bracts.

"Look-Alike" Species

Interesting Facts:

Destroys livestock rangelands.

Blazing stars, *Mentzelia spp.*, which can also be found in open habitats with dry soils, have a similar overall appearance, but can be distinguished by the presence of large showy petals and the lack of sharp stiff spines on the bracts.



Manual Treatment: Report immediately. Hand pulling can be effective if entire plant is removed, including taproot. Wear gloves. Bag and remove flowers or seed heads. Minimize soil disturbance. Follow up treatments will be required each year.



Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
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Flowers: One yellow flower on the end of each stem. Floral bracts have sharp, stiff, straw-coloured spines that radiate outward in a star-like pattern. Below these is a pair of short lateral spines covered in cotton-like hair.



Leaves and Stems: basal rosette leaves are deeply lobed and pointy tipped; similar to dandelion rosette. One main flowering stalk. Rigid stems are coarse and covered with cottony hairs. Stem leaves are vertical, flat extensions along the stem. Upper leaves are entire and sharply pointed, becoming progressively smaller toward the top of the plant.



Seeds: Produces two types, seeds with fluffy plumes and seeds without. After dispersal, a fuzzy cotton ball remains on the end of the stem. Large plants can produce nearly 75,000 seeds.

Roots: Deep, stout taproot, 1.8+ metres in length.

Reproduction and Dispersal: By seed. Most seeds fall within a 1.2 metre radius of the parent plant. Seeds travel by soil movement, water, animals, humans, machines and vehicles, or by use of commercial seed.

Habitat Preference: Best adapted to open grasslands with deep, well drained soils but also capable of establishing on shallow, rocky soils with minimal rainfall. Does not tolerate dense shade.

