

CONTROL

YELLOW STAR THISTLE cannot be controlled in a single treatment or single year. Effective control requires the suppression of the weed, combined with establishment of desirable vegetation. A single plant permitted to mature and go to seed can yield as many as 29,000 seeds per square meter. These seeds can form an underground seed bed viable for as long as ten years! For this reason it is important that the plant be destroyed before going to seed.

MANUAL CONTROL

The surest, most environmentally friendly way to control the weed is by cutting it off at ground level with a hoe or shovel. It will not re-grow from the root. If it has developed flowers, it should be taken to the yellow starthistle burn pit, located at the CSD green-waste area, using care not to drop seeds en-route. Mowing is not recommended because the plant will simply sprout branches and flowers below the mower level.

SPRAYING

Infestations too large for manual control may be sprayed. A clopyralid herbicide product ("Star Thistle Killer") that is appropriate for both pre- and post-emergent Yellow Starthistle control is available over the counter to homeowners for use on pastures and non-crop areas. Other herbicides can be used, such as glyphosate (Roundup®) or a 2,4-D mixture (Weed B Gon®), at different plant growth stages.

RESPONSIBILITIES

In February, 1999, the Bear Valley Community Services District Board of Directors passed Ordinance No 99-144, requiring property owners to abate hazardous weeds, including yellow starthistle.

While the CSD controls abatement on the road rights-of-way and the Bear Valley Springs Association is responsible for growth along Equestrian Trails, private property owners are responsible for monitoring and controlling infestations on their property.

Further information is available from the University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu>



"WEED"
OUT
THIS
UNWELCOME
INVADER

**BEAR VALLEY
COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
28999 SOUTH LOWER
VALLEY ROAD
TEHACHAPI, CA 93561**

YELLOW STARHISTLE

Is an Invasive Alien Species, designated Public Enemy Number One among weeds by experts with the University of California Extension. yellow starthistle has infested an estimated 15 million acres in California since its introduction to this state in the 1860's, probably in a shipment of alfalfa seed from its Eurasian homeland.

From its introduction into the Sacramento Valley, this weed has spread into Oregon, Idaho, and as far east as Colorado, and has worked its way south as far as Los Angeles County. It was first noticed in Bear Valley Springs in 1990.

HABITAT



Like many weeds, yellow starthistle is commonly found along roadsides and drainage ditches but “pioneers” may appear some distance from these areas and if not checked can blanket many acres in a few years’ time.

Yellow starthistle has an advantage over native plants because it matures earlier in the season. Its roots rapidly grow as far as 3 feet down into the soil, stealing water and nutrients that the native plants need to survive the hot summer. Yellow starthistle degrades wildlife habitat and chokes out desirable species with ruthless indifference. ‘Chewing disease’ results when horses eat yellow starthistle. This disease affects their nervous system and is usually fatal.

IDENTIFICATION

Yellow starthistle is a gray-green to blue-green plant, which varies in height from six inches to six feet. In late spring into fall it produces bright yellow dandelion-like flowers with sharp spines surrounding the flower head.

In its rosette stage, it is characterized by a number of leaves, usually twelve or more, arranged in a circle close to the ground, resembling dandelion leaves. The leaves are deeply serrated, with a characteristic arrowhead shape at the end.



Shortly after forming the rosette, the plant bolts, sending up a green stem which begins to branch immediately above the ground. In this stage it can be identified by the rosette surrounding the stem as well as by the shape of the stem and branches, which appear winged due to ribs on the stems, which later become leaves.

