

Invasive Species Factsheet-Scotch Thistle

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Species Common Name: Scotch Thistle

Species Scientific Name: *Omopordum acanthium*

Native Range and Introduction: The plant is native to eastern Europe to central Asia; it was introduced in the 1800's to the eastern United States as an ornamental. It has primarily spread by contaminated seed and movement of soil/gravel for construction purposes.

Description: Biennial forming a rosette the first year, which can grow up to 12 feet tall at maturity, stems are "winged" with spines, large leaves especially at the base having a gray appearance and being spine tipped. The gray appearance comes from a dense hair covering. Plant produces many purplish heads, with spine line bracts (modified leaves on bottom side of flowers). Heads can produce up to 20,000 seeds per plant.

Ecological and Economical Threats: This species will form monocultures after disturbance (heavy grazing, fire, etc) quickly, this can prevent or slow the reestablishment of the preferred species to the site. It also can form dense enough patching preventing livestock from getting to food or water sources. Economic loss is primarily from loss of forage for producers grazing livestock.

Regulated Status in Wyoming: Scotch Thistle is on the State Designated Noxious Species List and is also on the North American Invasive Species Management Association Weed Free Forage Noxious Species List that Wyoming uses for weed free forage standards.

Distribution in Wyoming: Scotch Thistle is found in every county in Wyoming.

Control Options:

Mechanical: Being a biennial species the plant can be removed at or below the top of the soil by pulling or chopping.

Chemical: Many herbicides will work for this species including Milestone (Aminopyralid) in range or pasture, Banvel (Dicamba) in some crops, or 2, 4-D in lawns.

Cultural: Competition for resources by perennial plants should help keep this biennial species in check.

Integrated Weed Management: This will usually lead to the best overall control. This could include an early season herbicide application teamed with a fall mechanical clean up.

Online Resources:

URL: <http://www.invasiveplantatlas.org/subject.html?sub=4432>

URL: <http://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/37456>

URL: <https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/scotchthistle.shtml>

Image 1 URL: <https://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=5448091>

Image 2 URL: <https://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=5392411>



Image 1-Stems and flowering heads



Image 2-Rosettes

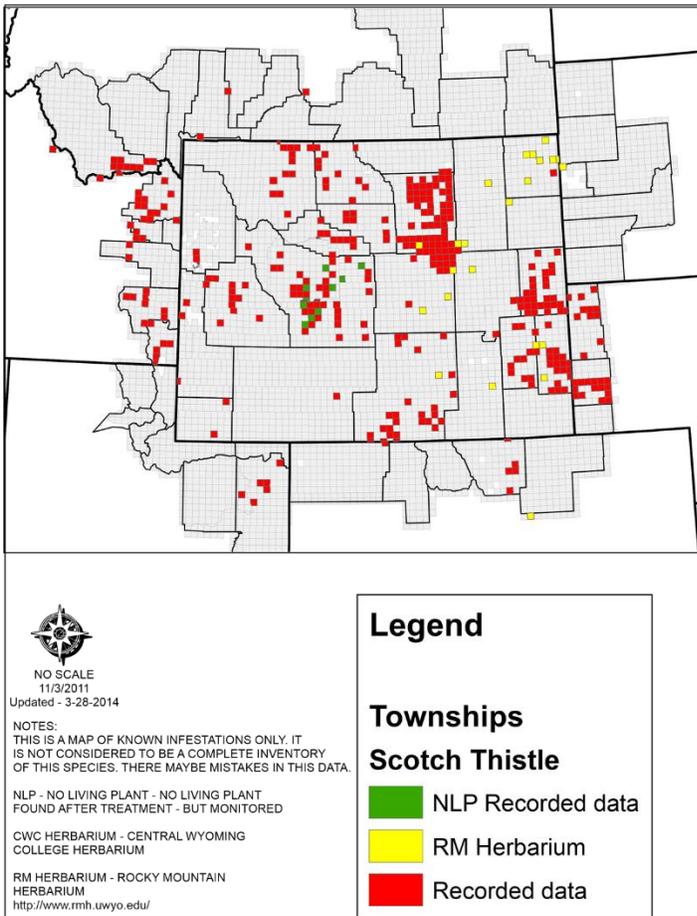


Figure 1-Scotch Thistle Distribution in Wyoming and Surrounding States
URL: http://wyoweed.org/images/Weed_Maps/Scotch_thistle.pdf