

MUSK THISTLE

Carduus nutans

EARLY DETECTION, RAPID RESPONSE.

Invasive weeds reduce land values, degrade natural areas and once established are very difficult to control. When found, the plants must be removed and the area monitored to prevent future spread. The Invasive Species Program (ISP) is a joint effort between TRCD and NTCD who collaborate with the *Lake Tahoe Basin Weed Coordinating Group (LTBWCG)*, a diverse group of agencies and community members dedicated to preventing and controlling invasive weed species in the Tahoe Basin. An early detection and rapid response network is coordinated by the LTBWCG to ensure that the entire basin is surveyed annually. TRCD offers one-on-one vegetation consultations for homeowners to help identify and control local invasive weed infestations and to find native plant alternatives. By being an extra set of eyes, educated homeowners increase our ability to detect new infestations in Tahoe.

How did Musk Thistle get here?

First recorded in North America in Pennsylvania in 1852, musk thistle was introduced accidentally to the east coast in ship ballast water. This invasive weed spread to the Midwest in the early 20th century, and was established in the early 1940's.



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Origin: Europe, northern Africa, Asia

Noxious Weed List: NV-Yes, B-listed; CA-Yes, A-listed

Habitat: Forest, rangelands, roadsides, waste areas, ditches

Life Cycle: Biennial

Flowering time: June to July

Spread: Wind carries thousands of seeds

Height: 1-7ft, commonly 3-4ft (largest thistle)

Stems: Naked & bent towards flower, winged spines toward base

Leaves: Smooth, waxy dark green surface with a light-green mid rib; deeply cut. Extend onto stem, creating a winged appearance.

Flowers: Single, flat, very large nodding flower at end of stem with purplish bracts.

Flower color: Deep pink to purple



Why is it a threat to the Tahoe Basin?

- ⊗ Long taproot contributes to soil erosion
- ⊗ Seeds remain viable in the soil for over ten years
- ⊗ Degrades wildlife habitat by crowding out native plants
- ⊗ Large infestations limit access for hikers and animals



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NOXIOUS WEED:

An invasive plant that is difficult to control, aggressive, and intrusive, as well as detrimental to important native species.

Those listed as A-listed are: **B-listed:**

- Only found in a few places so far
- Control required in all infestations
- Not allowed in nurseries

- Established in scattered populations
- Control required in areas where populations aren't well established
- Not allowed in nurseries

Do Not Disturb!
TAHOE NATIVE



Anderson's Thistle

- ☺ **Flower:** Single, straight broom-shaped blooms at end of stem
- ☺ **Flower color:** Rose red to reddish purple
- ☺ **Stem:** Purplish and thornless
- ☺ **Leaves:** Smooth, divided, and wavy with spiny edges

Call Us!
NONNATIVE INVASIVE



Musk Thistle

- ☹ **Flower:** Single, flat, very large nodding flower at end of stem with purplish bracts.
- ☹ **Flower color:** Deep pink to purple
- ☹ **Stem:** Naked and bent towards flower, winged spines toward base
- ☹ **Leaves:** Smooth, dark green with a light-green midrib; deeply cut. Extend onto stem, creating a winged appearance.

Think you spotted this invasive weed?

- 1) Please contact your local Resource Conservation District. In California, call TRCD (530) 543-1501 ext. 113. In Nevada, call NTCD (775) 586-1610 ext. 28.
- 2) A member of the Invasive Species Program (ISP) staff will come identify the plant and record the weed's location to add to our Basin-wide map.
- 3) District staff will work with you to determine the best method of control that fits your property and the invasive weed(s) present. With your permission, the District will monitor the site after control measures are completed to ensure control efforts succeeded.
- 4) At your request, your local RCD also provides native and adapted plant consultations to homeowners free of charge. After evaluating your property, staff can provide plant plans for your yard and accompany you to a local nursery to help pick out native plants that will thrive on and add beauty to your landscape.

