

# SCOTCH THISTLE

## *Onopordum acanthium*

### 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 Scotch thistle get here?

Scotch thistle was introduced as an ornamental plant in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This national emblem of Scotland has been credited with helping Scotland to defeat the Vikings, by revealing the positions of barefooted soldiers who yelled in agony after stepping on its spiny leaves.



**Origin:** Europe  
**Noxious Weed List:** NV-Yes, B-listed; CA-Yes, A-listed  
**Habitat:** Meadows, pastures, disturbed areas  
**Life Cycle:** Biennial or annual  
**Flowering time:** Mid June through September  
**Spread:** Seeds that are viable for 30 years  
**Height:** Up to 8ft tall  
**Stems:** Broad and hairy with spiny wings  
**Leaves:** Very large (up to 2ft long and 1ft wide), gray green, hairy, deeply lobed with sharp yellow spines and light-colored mid-vein  
**Flowers:** Globe-shaped, upright, spiny  
**Flower color:** Purple



### Why is it a threat to the Tahoe Basin?

- ☹ Forms dense stands impenetrable to humans and wildlife
- ☹ Dense stands displace native Sierra wildflowers
- ☹ Decreases wildlife habitat—too spiny for animals to eat



### NOXIOUS WEED:

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

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Those listed as A-Listed are:</b>  | <b>B-listed:</b>   |
| -Only found in a few places so far    | -Established in scattered populations                                |
| -Control required in all infestations | -Control required in areas where populations aren't well established |
| -Not allowed in nurseries             | -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



*Scotch Thistle*

- ☹ **Flower:** Globe-shaped, wide, spiny
- ☹ **Flower color:** Purple-violet
- ☹ **Stem:** Broad, hairy, winged, spiny
- ☹ **Leaves:** Large, deeply lobed with a prominent mid-vein and yellow spines

**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.

