

FLODMAN THISTLE

[*Cirsium flodmanii* (Rydb.) Arthur]



FLODMAN THISTLE

State Noxious Weed List: **No.**

Flodman thistle is a native species found from Saskatchewan and Manitoba to Iowa and Colorado. This thistle is a food source for a variety of insect and bird species. The stems of Flodman thistle can be peeled and eaten and were part of the Native American diet.

Identification and growth form:

Flodman thistle is a deep-rooted perennial and usually grows 3 to 4 feet tall. The leaves are shiny green on top with slight pubescence and are white and very pubescent below, alternate, rigid and deeply lobed. Each lobe has three points, one of which sticks out at nearly right angles, giving a flipping appearance, which is helpful to tell this plant from the often similar appearing wavyleaf thistle.

The rosettes are often 4 to 6 inches in diameter with oblong or lanceolate leaves that vary from deeply lobed to nearly complete. The leaves are green to gray and especially pubescent below. The flowers are deep purple to pink, rarely white, tube shaped and approximately 1 inch long. The flower heads have a strong yellow spine and a sticky secretion that attracts and catches insects. Flodman thistle usually flowers from mid-July through September in North Dakota. The achenes are about 0.1 to 0.15 inch long and oval, and vary from tan to brown and have a conspicuous yellow collar.

Why is this plant a concern?

Flodman thistle is more competitive than most other native species and has the potential to infest large areas. It is tolerant to high salt concentration in soil but not as tolerant as Canada thistle. Although it grows best under moist conditions as most thistles do, it can survive under drought conditions, which gives it a competitive advantage on semiarid rangeland.

How do I control this plant?

Native thistle species such as Flodman thistle seldom become weedy because of the variety of insects and birds that feed on the plant and several pathogens that cause a variety of diseases. However, of the native thistles found in the region, Flodman thistle is one that can form dense colonies, especially in dry years.

Herbicides that are effective for controlling Flodman thistle in noncropland include products that contain clopyralid (various), Tordon (picloram), dicamba (various), Overdrive (dicamba plus diflufenzopyr) and Milestone (aminopyralid). Control is greatest when applied to thistle at the early bud growth stage (early summer) or in the fall to plants in the rosette form. Herbicide treatment will not be necessary if one allows the native pests to build in population and reduce this thistle through time. Flodman thistle has not been a problem weed in cropland.