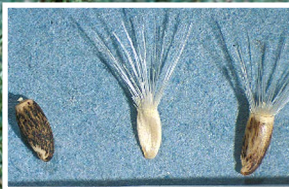




Yellow starthistle



Yellow starthistle

(*Centaurea solstitialis* L.)

Yellow starthistle is an extremely invasive and fast-spreading annual weed of the knapweed family. The plant grows 3 or more feet tall and is multibranched with winged stems. Each stem terminates with a bright yellow flower that has needle like straw-colored bracts up to 2 inches long. Leaves and stems are gray-green to green and covered with pubescent hairs. The lower leaves are deeply lobed while upper leaves are smaller and entire. Yellow starthistle has a deep taproot but only spreads by seed. A single plant can produce 150,000 seeds most of which are plumed and dispersed in the wind. Remaining seeds stay in the flower head and are dispersed in blowing snow. Yellow starthistle seeds germinate in the fall or early spring. The plants bolt in late May to early June and flowering begins in mid-July.

Yellow starthistle is adapted to a wide variety of environments. The plant first was found in North Dakota in 1964. That infestation and all subsequent ones were eradicated.

