

MUSK THISTLE

Carduus nutans



Best defense is to prevent seed production.

Lifespan of a single plant is two years.

Preventing overgrazing is key to keep infestations out.

Musk thistles start as a rosette of spiny leaves with a light colored midrib and a frosted appearance around the edges. In their second year of growth the plants will bolt, sending up long shoots with flowers. After the plant produces seeds it dies.

Musk thistles have tough spines making them undesirable to animals. As overgrazing occurs around the thistles more sunlight and nutrients reach them so they can grow larger. Each plant can produce over 10,000 seeds, combined with a 95% germination success rate it quickly becomes a major problem.