

Musk Thistle

Identification characteristics:

- Dark green, hairless leaves
- Wide, white midrib
- Margins of leaves may appear silver or gray
- Long, yellow spines on edge of leaf
- Can grow 6-8 feet tall
- Rosette leaves appear waxy
- Flower heads deep rose, violet, or purple
- Dark purple to brown bracts under flower head, resembles a pinecone
- Flower heads typically bent at 90 degree angle

Control options:

- Chemical control, best when sprayed at rosette stage
 - Examples include but not limited to:
 - 2,4-D (Amine)
 - Dicamba (Rifle, Banvel, Clarity)
 - Aminopyralid (Milestone)
 - Clopyralid (Stinger, Transline, Pyramid)
 - Chlorsulfuron (Telar, Glean)
 - Aminocyclopyrachlor
 - Metsulfuron (Escort)
 - Picloram (Tordon)
 - Always follow label instructions when applying herbicides
- Mechanical control
 - Mow prior to flowering to prevent seed set, may require several events
 - Dig to completely sever the main root
 - If flowered, collect and burn seed heads to prevent seed spread
- Cultural control
 - Encourage growth of desirable vegetation
- Biological control
 - Various thistle rosette weevil and thistle seed head weevil
 - Varied success with grazing



Goshen County Weed and Pest
Thistle Guide, 2018