

Prairie thistle

Cirsium canescens Nutt.



Prairie thistle
Asteraceae
(Sunflower family)

Prairie thistle is a perennial reproducing from seed. Seedling plant leaves become lobed as they develop. The entire plant is covered with fine hair. Each leaf is deeply lobed with yellow spines at the tip of each lobe. Leaf margins have smaller spines. Flowers are cream-white with the bracts being covered by short yellow spines. Seeds are light colored and curved. Blooms appear in early summer with seed development completed by July.

Prairie thistle is common along roadsides and in rangeland in the Rocky Mountain region but is not considered a threat to livestock forage production.



Early spring growth appears as a blue-green rosette with deeply lobed leaves.



White flowers appear on this perennial in mid-summer. Yellow spines are found on the rounded involucre under the flower.